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ELEGANT EXTRACTS,

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USEFUL AND ENTERTAINING PASSAGES,

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Vol. 1.

FROM THE

BEST ENGLISH AUTHORS AND TRANSLATIONS;

PRINCIPALLY DESIGNED

FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS.

ORIGINALLY COMPILED BY THE

REV. VICESIMUS KNOX, D. D.

A new Edition, embellished with elegant Engravings.

PREPARED BY

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. I.—PROSE.

Boston:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY SAMUEL WALKER,
NO. 347, (HARLEM-PLACE) WASHINGTON-STREET.

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293
J. D. Willard
Nov. 30. 1850

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, *to wit:*
District Clerk's Office.

L. S. BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the seventeenth day of March A. D. 1826, in the fiftieth year of the Independence of the United States of America, SAMUEL WALKER, of the said District, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, *to wit:*

Elegant Extracts, or Useful and Entertaining Passages from the best English Authors and Translations; principally designed for the use of young persons. Originally compiled by the Rev. Vicesimus Knox, D. D. a new Edition, embellished with elegant Engravings, prepared by James G. Percival, in six volumes. Vol. 1. PROSE.

In Conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned:" and also to an Act entitled "An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled, An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

JNO. W. DAVIS, { *Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

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TO THE

PRESENT EDITION.

It was the original design of this work, as prepared by Dr. Knox, to furnish a manual of English composition for the use of the higher schools in England. It was not the intention of the compiler to give the cream of all the best English authors, for the use and gratification of the literary. He had an humbler but not less useful object in view, namely, to communicate valuable instruction and rational entertainment to the youth of his country, at the same time that he supplied them with the best models of English composition. We have not ventured to change the original plan. We have conceived that the work would be more useful, and on the whole more interesting to the American Public, if we suffered it to retain its original character. We have only removed such articles as were more immediately suited to the meridian of England,

and have endeavoured to supply their place by others better adapted to the circumstances of our own country. It has been our object in preparing this work, to supply families with a set of volumes particularly calculated for the improvement of their younger members; and although it has been our aim to retain or insert such articles only, as we thought to be written in good taste, yet we have sought rather to provide the public in general with a useful and entertaining manual, than to administer to the peculiar gratification of the literary.

BOSTON, June 1, 1825.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

TENTH ENGLISH EDITION.

This Book owes its origin to a wish, expressed by persons of experience in the conduct of schools, that such a compilation might be published for their use, as, by means of a full page, and a small, but very legible type, might contain in one Volume a little introductory Library. A common Pocket Volume is soon perused, and laid aside for want of novelty; but to supply a large school with a constant succession, or with voluminous Sets of English Books, is too expensive and inconvenient to be generally practicable. A quantity of matter is therefore collected in this one Volume, great enough to fill up a considerable time and furnish an abundance of knowledge, before it can be read to satiety or entirely exhausted; and it may properly be said to constitute, what it was intended to be, a portable library for learners from the age of nine or ten, to the age at which they leave their school. At the same time, it is evident upon inspection, that it abounds with such Extracts, as may be read with pleasure and improvement, in the more advanced periods of life. Though it professes to be a school-book, and is chiefly and primarily adapted to young scholars; yet it is certain, that all readers may find it an agreeable companion, and particularly qualified to enliven short intervals of leisure.

The compilation is calculated not only for *classical* schools, but for those also which are limited to the language of our own country. It is certain young persons cannot read a book containing so much *matter*, without great improvement in the *English* language, together with correct ideas on many pleasing subjects of taste and general literature; and, which is of much higher importance, they cannot fail to imbibe from it, together with an increase of elegant knowledge, the purest principles of virtue and religion. It may be employed in various methods for the improvement of learners according to the judgment of various instructers. The pupils may not only read it in private, or in the classes in the presence of their teachers, at stated times; but write out select paragraphs in their copy-books, commit favourite passages to memory, and endeavour to recite them with the proper gesture and pronunciation for the improvement of their powers of utterance. With respect indeed to the *Art of Speaking*, so much talked of and pretended to, in the present age; it depends more on practice under the superintendence of a master, than on written precepts; and this Book professes to offer matter for practice, rather than systematic instruction, which may be more advantageously given *Vivâ Voce*, by him who is able to enforce and illustrate his rules by his example. To learn the practice of speaking in public, or the art of managing the voice, and adorning the *Delivery*, by written rules alone, is like learning to play on a musical instrument by the bare assistance of a Book of Directions, without a master; a mode usually found no less inefficacious than tedious and operose.

Upon the whole there cannot be a doubt but that a Book, like this, purposely compiled for the use of young persons of both sexes, copious beyond former examples, singularly various in its contents, selected from writers whose characters are established without controversy, abounding with entertainment and useful information, inculcating the purest principles of morality and religion, and displaying excellent models of style and language, must effectually contribute to the improvement of the RISING GENERATION in knowledge, taste, and virtue. The Public have, indeed, already felt, and acknowledged its utility, by the least fallible proof, their general reception of it. It has been adopted in all the most respectable places of education, and has scattered, far and wide, the seeds of excellence, which may one day arrive at maturity and add to the happiness both of the community and of human nature.

What ENGLISH book similar to this volume, calculated entirely for the use of young students at schools, and under private tuition, was to be found in the days of our fathers? None, certainly. The consequence was, that the ENGLISH PART of education (to many the most important part) was defective even in places most celebrated for classic discipline; and boys were often enabled to read Latin perfectly, and write it tolerably, who, from the disuse or the want of models for practice, were *wretchedly qualified to do either in their native language.*—From this unhappy circumstance, classical education was brought into some degree of disgrace; and preposterous it certainly was, to study, during many of the best years of life, foreign and dead languages, with the most scrupulous accuracy, and at the same time entirely to neglect that mother tongue, which is in daily and hourly requisition; to be well read in TULLY, and a total stranger to

ADDISON; to have HOMER and HORACE by heart, and to know little more than the names of MILTON and POPE.

Classical learning, thus defective in a point so obvious to detection, incurred the imputation of pedantry. It was observed to assume an important air of superiority, without displaying, to the common observer, any just pretensions to it. It even appeared with marks of inferiority, when brought into occasional collision with well-informed understandings, cultivated by English literature alone, but greatly proficient in the school of experience. Persons who had never extended their views to ancient and classic lore, but had been confined in their education to English, triumphed in the *common* intercourse of society, over the academical scholar; and learning often hid her head in confusion, when pointed at, as *pedantry*, by the finger of a loquacious DUNCE.

It became highly expedient therefore to introduce *more of English reading* into our classical schools; that those who went out into the world with their coffers richly stored with the golden medals of antiquity, might at the same time be furnished with a sufficiency of current coin from the modern mint, for the commerce of ordinary life: but there was no *school-book*, copious and various enough, entirely calculated for this purpose. The Grecian and Roman History, the Spectators, and Plutarch's Lives, were indeed sometimes introduced, and certainly with great advantage. But still, an *uniformity of English books*, in schools, was a desideratum. It was desirable that *all the students of the same class*, provided with copies of the same book, containing the proper variety, might be enabled to read it together; and thus benefit each other by an emulous study of the same subject or composition, at the same time, and under the eye of their common master.

For this important purpose, the large collections, entitled "ELEGANT EXTRACTS," both in Prose and Verse, were *projected*. Their reception is the fullest testimony in favour both of the design and its execution.

The labour indeed of a Compiler of a book like this is humble; but its beneficial influence is extensive; and in this instance, he feels a pride and pleasure in the reflection, that he has been serving his country effectually, without sacrificing either to avarice or to vanity. It is a disinterested effort. It gratifies neither the love of money nor of fame; for the Editor claims no property in the work, and is conscious that it is of too humble a nature to contribute any thing to celebrity.

The renown attending public services is seldom proportioned to their utility. Glitter is not always the most brilliant on the surface of the most valuable substance. The loadstone is plain and unattractive in its appearance, while the false bauble, on the finger of the beau, sparkles with envied lustre. The spade, the plough, the shuttle, have no ornament bestowed on them, while the toy and trinket are decorated with ribands, gold, and ivory. Yet REASON, undazzled in her decisions, dares to pronounce, while she holds the scales, that the USEFUL preponderates; and that the showy and unsubstantial kicks the beam of her balance, while it attracts the eye of inconsiderate admiration.

Things intrinsically good and valuable have however the advantage of securing permanent esteem, though they may lose the *éclat* of temporary applause. They carry with them to the closet and posterity their own recommendation.

As it is likely that the student who reads this volume of Prose with pleasure, may also possess a taste for POETRY, it is right in this place to mention, that there is published by the Proprietors of this Book a volume of *Poetry*, similar to this in size and form; and as he may also wish to improve himself in the very useful art of *Letter-writing*, that there is also provided a most copious volume of Letters from the best English authors, under the title of ELEGANT EPISTLES.

This whole *Set of Extracts*, more copious, more convenient in its form, and valuable in its materials, than any which have preceded it, certainly must conduce, in a very high degree, to that *great national object*, the PUBLIC INSTRUCTION of the middle and higher orders of society, to promote which has been the primary, and indeed the sole object of the Compiler.

MEMOIR
OF THE LATE
REVEREND VICESIMUS KNOX, D. D.
FORMERLY HEAD MASTER OF TUNBRIDGE SCHOOL, KENT, &C.

Dr. Vicesimus Knox was the only son of the Rev. Vicesimus Knox; a fellow of St. John's College, Oxford; afterwards a Master of Merchant-Tailors' School; and, lastly, Head Master of Tunbridge School. He was himself a respectable scholar, and greatly esteemed in the exercise of his clerical functions. It has been observed, that there is much injustice in withholding the names of those from whom eminent characters have received their education. Dr. Knox's father took the care of his son's classical instruction entirely upon himself until the age of fourteen. Having then made a considerable proficiency, he was entered in a high class at Merchant-Tailors' School, under the Rev. James Townley, who, though not deeply learned, possessed a refined taste for the charms of literature, as well as much urbanity, which he was very successful in imparting among his pupils. At this time that amiable man and elegant scholar, Dr. Jortin, took great notice of the subject of this Memoir, frequently inviting him to pass his holidays at the vicarage at Kensington; and, together with Oliver Goldsmith, whom at this period he also often visited, probably confirmed that strong literary turn in his youthful mind, which never forsook him in after life.

From school he was elected to a fellowship at St. John's, Oxford, where Dr. Dennis was then President; and of him he always spoke with grateful respect. At the university he immediately distinguished himself; and his exercises, particularly in Latin prose and verse, were greatly admired. In consequence of which, he was appointed one of the speakers at the *Encenia*, when Lord North was installed Chancellor of the University, and received much applause. He also amused himself in the intervals from his severer pursuits with English composition, and shortly before he finally left Oxford, sent the manuscript of the first volume of "*Essays Moral and Literary*," as a present, without a name, to Mr. Dilly, the publisher. It was shown to that eminent critic, Dr. Johnson, who spoke of the style and matter in terms of high panegyric, and predicted the future fame of the author; while the favourable reception given to it by the public has been almost unexampled. The work was subsequently extended to three volumes, and the name of the author no longer concealed. It has been translated into most of the European languages; and at once ranked the writer with the English Classics. Our limited space does not allow of a detailed examination of the different papers, and we therefore merely state, that they contain a happy mixture of the best style of our most celebrated authors, with a harmony, polish, and force, that are entirely the writer's own.

Dr. Knox next published his celebrated treatise on "*Liberal Education*," in two volumes, the success of which was not less than that of his former work; it having long superseded all others upon this important subject. In pointing out the defects in the education of youth, he could not pass over the gross relaxation of discipline in the universities which at that time prevailed, more especially at Oxford. Whatever resentment was felt in the university at the moment, the suggestions of the author have been since attended to; —a reform has taken place, and he lived to express great satisfaction at the admirable spirit of emulation among the students, which the recent statutable regulations have produced. Had his life been spared, he would, probably, in a new edition of this work, have expunged many of those strictures, which he, happily, considered no longer applicable.

Shortly before the appearance of "*Liberal Education*," Dr. Knox, having taken his degrees, upon the resignation of his father, was elected to the Head-Mastership of Tunbridge School. This step was taken against the urgent remonstrances of Dr. Dennis and Dr. Wheeler, the learned public orator, both of whom feared, without foundation as it proved in the result, that so laborious an undertaking would interfere with the literary career he had so successfully commenced. Mrs. Montague also, and several other eminent characters of that day, took considerable pains to persuade him to devote himself entirely to the academic life at Oxford, where, they represented, the most brilliant prospects were before him.

In 1787, Dr. Knox published a series of miscellaneous papers, under the title of "*Winter Evenings*," in three volumes, 8vo. They have also passed through many editions; and in this work the author has successfully combined moral instruction with elegant entertainment.

About this time he had the honour of receiving from Philadelphia a diploma, conferring a Doctor's degree in that university, with an unanimous expression of the high sense that learned body entertained of the services his works, which had all been republished in America, had rendered to the cause of learning and virtue. For the use of his own school, which had risen to great reputation, he edited *Horace* and *Juvenal*, upon the *expurgata* plan; and superintended that useful series of compilations, the *Elegant Extracts*, *Elegant Epistles*, *Domestic Divinity*, &c. &c.; the prefaces of which were all written by himself.

In 1793 appeared "*Personal Nobility*," in one volume, "containing advice to a young nobleman, in a series of letters, on the conduct of his studies, and the best means of maintaining the dignity of the peerage." The abolition of nobility in France had taken place at this period, and given a particular interest to the subject of this work, which is written in a glowing strain of eloquence, and is not less replete with wise precepts than constitutional opinions. It was in this year also that he preached his famous sermon at Brighton. He had long been most conscientiously and deeply impressed with the folly and wickedness of war, and reprobated it with great earnestness upon all occasions. The subject of this sermon was, "*The Unlawfulness of Offensive War!*" which he followed up by translating an adage of Erasmus, entitled, "*Bellum dulce inexpertis*." This translation was published under the title of "*Antipolemus*;" and a very respectable society has since been established under the appellation of *Antipolemists*; though the peculiar political state of the world that has existed ever since its formation, has yet presented but few favourable opportunities for their labours of mercy.

At the commencement of the revolutionary war against France, several anonymous popular political works were attributed to Dr. Knox, but with what truth we have not been able to ascertain. He appears, from about the year 1796, to have devoted his labours principally to the interests of religion and education.

His admirable "*Sermons upon Faith, Hope, and Charity*," in one volume, 8vo. were published about this period; and were followed by "*Christian Philosophy*," in two volumes, which was written chiefly as an antidote to Paine's irreligious writings. He next gave to the world, "*Considerations on the Nature and Efficacy of the Lord's Supper*;" the principal object of which was to assert the important truth, "that benefits are annexed to the reception of the Eucharist," in opposition to the opinions advanced by Bishops Hoadley and Pearce, Drs. Sykes, Balguy, and Bell. He also published several single sermons. In one, which he preached at the opening of the Chapel of the Philanthropic Society, in St. George's Fields, he first called attention to the necessity of increasing the number of the places of public worship on the establishment. A very eloquent Sermon from his pen, "upon the Duty and Advantage of educating the Poor," is also to be found at the end of the last edition of "*Domestic Divinity*."

The reputation that Dr. Knox had acquired in the *Belles Lettres* was most fully sustained by his works in theology. They display an elevated tone of piety, his usual polished and powerful style, and most learnedly enforce doctrines of the soundest divinity.

That eminent polemic and celebrated divine, Bishop Horsley, with a liberality that did him honour, as his politics were known to be at variance with Dr. Knox's, publicly eulogized his treatise on the "Lord's Supper" in the Charges delivered to his Clergy, and recommended it to their particular perusal.

Perhaps, scarcely any of Dr. Knox's numerous writings will be read with so much delight as the last, which appeared a few months only before his death,—a pamphlet against the "*Degradation of Grammar Schools*." It may be remembered, that a bill was pending in Parliament for the general Education of the Poor; among its provisions was one, which would have had the effect of lowering the education now afforded in the ancient grammar-schools, by giving instruction in writing, reading, and arithmetic, under the same roof, to an humbler class of scholars, out of the funds already exclusively appropriated by the donors to the learned languages. This bill has been since withdrawn. It afforded, however, a subject for a splendid defence of classical education. Dr. Knox combated most powerfully the arguments of Milton, Locke, Bacon, and others, who recommend the teaching boys *things* in preference to the classics. There are few compositions in the English language, that for strength of reasoning and brilliancy of style can be compared with this pamphlet. It may be taken as a standard of his powers as a writer, and a specimen of the energy of his mind.

Dr. Knox left Tunbridge in 1812, where he was succeeded in the school by his younger son; and retired to London. He was rector of Runwell and Ramsden Crays, in Essex, of which livings he was the patron, and minister of Shipbourne, in Kent; at which latter place he performed the duties of a parish priest for nearly forty years, with great regularity. After his retirement, while he lived in London, the situation of his benefices in Essex not permitting residence, he never withheld his powerful aid from the pulpit, whenever it was solicited in favour of the various charities with which the metropolis abounds; and there are few of those institutions which have not benefited by his exertions. As a preacher he will long be remembered; his matter was always excellent, and his manner possessed a dignity, propriety, and impressiveness, that invariably riveted the attention of his congregations.

The politics of Dr. Knox were decidedly those of the Whigs. His steadiness and consistency were remarkable, and he scorned any concealment of his opinions, however personally disadvantageous to himself might be the avowal of them. Mr. Fox, and other distinguished leaders of the Whig party, sought his acquaintance; and there is no doubt, if political events had afforded the opportunity, but that he would have filled one of the highest stations in the church. Preferment, however, was never his object, nor occupied his thoughts. He was from conscientious conviction a firm friend of the establishment; and his strenuous support of it excited the hostility of many of the most eminent separatists, who expressed, however, the highest respect for his motives; for though he forcibly exposed the absurdity of many of their tenets, especially those of the Methodists, he was ever the advocate of a liberal toleration. Entertaining much respect for the private character of the late Bishop Dampier, he felt it his duty to protest against an address which that bishop proposed for the adoption of the clergy, at a visitation of his diocess, thanking the Crown for requiring a pledge from administration, that they never would again agitate the Catholic question. He was aware that differences of opinion might very conscientiously be entertained upon what is called Catholic emancipation, but also thought, that, with proper securities, it was contrary to sound policy and justice, no less than to the benign spirit of the Gospel, to impose civil disabilities upon so many millions of the Christian subjects of the united kingdom, merely because they remained faithful to the religion of their forefathers.

Dr. Knox possessed extraordinary facility in composition. He wrote and spoke Latin with the most classical purity. He was singularly felicitous in epigrammatic point, and a very eminent Greek scholar, though he did not value merely verbal criticism. To pass years in investigating particles, he deemed an abuse of learning, justly subjecting it to the charge of pedantry. He was a great student of the harmony of language, invariably forming his sentences with a regard to rythmical proportion. His reading may be said to have been nearly universal; as notwithstanding his almost idolatrous regard for the dead languages, he was not less conversant with the writers of France, Italy, and Spain, than with those of his own country.

It is unnecessary to attempt a delineation of the qualities that adorned his private character. The sentiments in all his works which exhibit so much amiable feeling, could only have flowed from a heart, which was indeed most exquisitely susceptible of all the charities of domestic life. His habits were unobtrusive and retired; and his whole demeanour in society was marked by a diffidence inseparable from his nature. His conversation was frequently distinguished by a delightful fervour of language and sentiment, and by an agreeable playfulness, when he was not under the influence of mental depression. From this cause, however, he was frequently silent in company, during the latter years of his life. He keenly felt the loss of a son in the flower of his age, and of his own wife shortly afterwards; and, lastly, of an only daughter in the prime of life; who was the wife of Robert Clement Sconce, Esq. of Plymouth, and died in 1818. A succession of such calamities occasioned long seasons of sorrow, producing a degree of despondence, that disqualified him alike for conversation and composition.

Dr. Knox enjoyed remarkably fine health; the consequence of an excellent constitution, as well as of regular habits. He was always an early riser. He was enabled to follow his literary pursuits with unabated ardour till within the last three days of his life. The strength of his constitution seemed to promise an extreme old age, when he was seized with an inflammation of the intestines, while on a visit at his son's house at Tunbridge, which terminated his life on the 6th of September, 1821, in the 69th year of his age. So little foreseen was this melancholy event, that he was under an engagement to the Rev. Dr. Rudge to preach at Limehouse for the benefit of the National Schools early in October; when the clergyman who officiated on the occasion noticed his decease in the following feeling and elegant language:—

"I have now concluded my observations on this important subject. It was to have been recommended to your attention by a preacher of consummate ability, whose name stands high in the records of literature, and whose life was one continued course of ardent benevolence and usefulness to his fellow-creatures. The place now filled by his unworthy substitute on this occasion, he had for a considerable time before his departure from this life, and while totally unconscious of the arrow that flieth in darkness, consented to occupy. But that Almighty Providence, to whose decrees all things in heaven and earth do bow and obey, thought proper, after a brief warning, to remove him from this state of existence to that reward, as we have reason to hope, which is reserved for those who have walked humbly and piously with their God, and enjoyed an unwearied delight in advancing the moral and intellectual happiness of their species. To him who has been appointed to supply the place of so eminent a pleader in the cause of charity, much indulgence is therefore necessary. He pretends neither to talent nor celebrity, and is content with simply expressing his hope that little needs be added to induce you to assist a cause so truly valuable."

His funeral took place at Tunbridge, when the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood spontaneously assembled on the occasion in a very numerous body, in deep mourning, to pay their last tribute of reverential regret. —Dr. Knox married the only daughter of Thomas Miller, Esq. formerly of Tunbridge;—a lady not less distinguished for elegance of manners than mental endowments, and who died in 1809. His family who survive him, are his sons, Mr. Knox, the Barrister, and the Rev. Thomas Knox, the present Master of Tunbridge School; and two sisters, married to John Vade and William Child, Esqrs. of London.

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LIBRARY CITY OF BOSTON

ELEGANT EXTRACTS

IN PROSE.

BOOK THE FIRST.

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS.

§ 1. *The Vision of Mirza, exhibiting a Picture of Human Life.*

On the fifth day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer. As I was here airing myself on the tops of the mountains, I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life; and passing from one thought to another, Surely, said I, man is but a shadow, and life a dream. Whilst I was thus musing, I cast my eyes towards the summit of a rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one in the habit of a shepherd, with a little musical instrument in his hand. As I looked upon him, he applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it. The sound of it was exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from any thing I had ever heard: they put me in mind of those heavenly airs that are played to the departed souls of good men upon their first arrival in Paradise, to wear out the impressions of the last agonies, and qualify them for the pleasures of that happy place. My heart melted away in secret raptures.

I had been often told, that the rock before me was the haunt of a genius; and that several had been entertained with that music, who had passed by it, but never heard that the musician had before made himself visible. When he had raised my thoughts, by those transporting airs which he played, to taste the pleasures of his conversation, as I looked upon him like one astonished, he beckoned to me, and, by the waving of his hand, directed me to approach the place where he sat. I drew near with that reverence which is due to a superior nature; and as my heart was entirely subdued by the captivating strains I had heard, I fell down at his feet, and wept. The genius smiled upon me with a look of compassion and affability that familiarized him to my imagination, and at once dispelled all the fears and apprehensions with which I approached him. He lifted me from the ground, and taking me by the hand, Mirza, said he, I have heard thee in thy soliloquies; follow me.

He then led me to the highest pinnacle of the rock, and placing me on the top of it, Cast thy eyes eastward, said he, and tell me what thou seest. I see, said I, a huge valley, and a prodigious tide of water rolling through it. The valley that thou seest, said he, is the vale of misery; and the tide of water that thou seest, is part of the great tide of eternity. What is the reason, said I, that the tide I see rises out of a thick mist at one end, and again loses itself in a thick mist at the other? What thou seest, said he, is that portion of eternity which is called Time, measured out by the sun, and reaching from the beginning of the world to its consummation. Examine now, said he, this sea, that is bounded with darkness at both ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it. I see a bridge, said I, standing in the midst of the tide. The bridge thou seest, said he, is human life; consider it attentively. Upon a more leisurely survey of it, I found that it consisted of threescore and ten entire arches, with several broken arches, which, added to those that were entire, made up the number about an hundred. As I was counting the arches, the genius told me that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches; but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition I now beheld it; but tell me further, said he, what thou discoverest on it. I see multitudes of people passing over it, said I, and a black cloud hanging on each end of it. As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge into the great tide that flowed underneath it; and upon further examination, perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell through them into the tide, and immediately disappeared. These hidden pit-falls were set very thick at the entrance of the bridge, so that throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud, but many of them fell into them. They grew thinner towards the middle, but multiplied and lay closer together towards the end of the arches that were entire.

There were indeed some persons, but their number was very small, that continued a kind of hobbling march on the broken arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a walk.

I passed some time in the contemplation of this wonderful structure, and the great variety of objects which it presented. My heart was filled with a deep melancholy, to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of mirth and jollity, and catching at every thing that stood by them, to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the heavens in a thoughtful posture, and, in the midst of a speculation, stumbled and fell out of sight. Multitudes were very busy in the pursuit of bubbles, that glittered in their eyes, and danced before them; but often, when they thought themselves within the reach of them, their footing failed, and down they sunk. In this confusion of objects, I observed some with scimitars in their hands, who ran to and fro upon the bridge, thrusting several persons on trap-doors which did not seem to lie in their way, and which they might have escaped had they not been thus forced upon them.

The genius seeing me indulge myself in this melancholy prospect, told me I had dwelt long enough upon it: Take thine eyes off the bridge, said he, and tell me if thou seest any thing thou dost not comprehend. Upon looking up, What mean, said I, those great flights of birds that are perpetually hovering about the bridge, and settling upon it from time to time? I see vultures, harpies, ravens, cormorants, and, among many other feathered creatures, several little winged boys, that perch in great numbers upon the middle arches. These, said the genius, are envy, avarice, superstition, despair, love, with the like cares and passions that infest human life.

I here fetched a deep sigh: Alas, said I, man was made in vain! how is he given away to misery and mortality! tortured in life, and swallowed up in death! The genius being moved with compassion towards me, bid me quit so uncomfortable a prospect. Look no more, said he, on man in the first stage of his existence, in his setting out for eternity; but cast thine eye on that thick mist into which the tide bears the several generations of mortals that fall into it. I directed my sight as I was ordered, and (whether or no the good genius strengthened it with any supernatural force, or dissipated part of the mist that was before too thick for the eye to penetrate) I saw the valley opening at the further end, and spreading forth into an immense ocean, that had a huge rock of adamant running through the midst of it, and dividing it into two equal parts. The clouds still rested on one half of it, insomuch that I could discover nothing in it: but the other appeared to me a vast ocean, planted with innumerable islands, that were covered with fruits and flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining seas that ran among them. I could see persons dressed in glorious habits, with garlands upon their heads, passing among the trees, lying down by the sides of fountains, or resting on beds of flowers; and could hear a confused harmony of singing birds, falling waters, human voices, and musical instruments. Gladness grew in me at the discovery of so delightful a scene. I wished for the wings of an eagle, that I might fly away to those happy seats; but the genius told me there was no passage to them, except through the gates of death that I saw opening every moment upon the bridge. The islands, said he, that lie so fresh and green before thee, and with which the whole face of the ocean appears spotted as far as thou canst see, are more in number than the sands on the sea-shore; there are myriads of islands behind those which thou here discoverest, reaching further than thine eye, or even thine imagination, can extend itself. These are the mansions of good men after death, who, according to the degree and kinds of virtue in which they excelled, are distributed among these several islands, which abound with pleasures of different kinds and degrees, suitable to the relishes and perfections of those who are settled in them; every island is a paradise accommodated to its respective inhabitants. Are not these, O Mirza, habitations worth contending for? Does life appear miserable, that gives thee opportunities of earning such a reward? Is death to be feared, that will convey thee to so happy an existence? Think not man was made in vain, who has such an eternity reserved for him.—I gazed with inexpressible pleasure on these happy islands. At length, said I, Show me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid under those dark clouds, which cover the ocean on the other side of the rock of adamant. The genius making me no answer, I turned about to address myself to him a second time, but I found that he had left me: I then turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating; but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdat, with oxen, sheep, and camels, grazing upon the sides of it. *Spectator.*

§ 2. *The Voyage of Life; an Allegory.*

"Life," says Seneca, "is a voyage, in the progress of which we are perpetually changing our scenes: we first leave childhood behind us, then youth, then the years of ripened manhood, then the better or more pleasing part of old age."—The perusal of this passage having excited in me a train of reflections on the state of man, the incessant fluctuation of his wishes, the gradual change of his disposition to all external objects, and the thoughtlessness with which he floats along the stream of time, I sunk into a slumber amidst my meditations, and, on a sudden, found my ears filled with the tumult of labour, the shouts of alacrity, the shrieks of alarm, the whistle of winds, and the dash of waters.

My astonishment for a time repressed my curiosity; but soon recovering myself so far as to inquire whither we were going, and what was the cause of such clamour and confusion; I was told that they were launching out into the ocean of Life; that we had already passed the straits of Infancy, in which multitudes had perished, some by the weakness and fragility of their vessels, and more by the folly, perverseness, or negligence of those who undertook to steer them; and that we were now on the main sea, abandoned to the winds and billows, without any other means of security than the care of the pilot, whom it was always in our power to choose, among great numbers that offered their direction and assistance.

I then looked round with anxious eagerness; and, first turning my eyes behind me, saw a stream flowing through flowery islands, which every one that sailed along seemed to behold with pleasure; but no sooner touched, than the current, which, though not noisy or turbulent, was yet irresistible, bore him away. Beyond these islands, all was darkness; nor could any of the passengers describe the shore at which he first embarked.

Before me, and on either side, was an expanse of waters violently agitated, and covered with so thick a mist, that the most perspicacious eyes could see but a little way. It appeared to be full of rocks and whirlpools, for many sunk unexpectedly while they were courting the gale with full sails, and insulting those whom they had left behind. So numerous, indeed, were the dangers, and so thick the darkness, that no caution could confer security. Yet there were many, who, by false intelligence, betrayed their followers into whirlpools, or by violence pushed those whom they found in their way against the rocks.

The current was invariable and insurmountable; but though it was impossible to sail against it, or to return to the place that was once passed, yet it was not so violent as to allow no opportunities for dexterity or courage, since, though none could retreat back from danger, yet they might often avoid it by oblique direction.

It was, however, not very common to steer with much care or prudence; for, by some universal infatuation, every man appeared to think himself safe, though he saw his consorts every moment sinking round him; and no sooner had the waves closed over them, than their fate and their misconduct were forgotten; the voyage was pursued with the same jocund confidence; every man congratulated himself upon the soundness of his vessel, and believed himself able to stem the whirlpool in which his friend was swallowed, or glide over the rocks on which he was dashed: nor was it often observed that the sight of a wreck made any man change his course; if he turned aside for a moment, he soon forgot the rudder, and left himself again to the disposal of chance.

This negligence did not proceed from indifference, or from weariness of their present condition; for not one of those who thus rushed upon destruction failed, when he was sinking, to call loudly upon his associates for that help which could not now be given him: and many spent their last moments in cautioning others against the folly by which they were intercepted in the midst of their course. Their benevolence was sometimes praised, but their admonitions were unregarded.

The vessels in which we had embarked, being confessedly unequal to the turbulence of the stream of life, were visibly impaired in the course of the voyage, so that every passenger was certain, that how long soever he might, by favourable accidents, or by incessant vigilance, be preserved, he must sink at last.

This necessity of perishing might have been expected to sadden the gay, and intimidate the daring, at least to keep the melancholy and timorous in perpetual torments, and hinder them from any enjoyment of the varieties and gratifications which nature offered them as the solace of their labours; yet in effect none seemed less to expect destruction than those to whom it was most dreadful; they all had the art of concealing their danger from themselves; and those who knew their inability to bear the sight of the terrors that embarrassed their way, took care never to look forward, but found some amusement of the present moment, and generally entertained themselves by playing with Hope, who was the constant associate of the voyage of Life.

Yet all that Hope ventured to promise, even to those whom she favoured most, was, not that they should escape, but that they should sink last; and with this promise every one was satisfied, though he laughed at the rest for seeming to believe it. Hope, indeed, apparently mocked the credulity of her companions; for, in proportion as their vessels grew leaky, she redoubled her assurances of safety; and none were more busy in making provisions for a long voyage, than they whom all but themselves saw likely to perish soon by irreparable decay.

In the midst of the current of Life, was the gulf of Intemperance, a dreadful whirlpool, interspersed with rocks, of which the pointed crags were concealed under water, and the tops covered with herbage, on which Ease spread couches of repose; and with shades, where Pleasure warbled the song of invitation. Within sight of these rocks, all who sailed on the ocean of Life must necessarily pass. Reason indeed was always at hand to steer the passengers through a narrow outlet, by which they might escape; but very few could, by her entreaties or remonstrances, be induced to put the rudder into her hand, without stipulating that she should approach so near unto the rocks of Pleasure, that they might solace themselves with a short enjoyment of that delicious region, after which they always determined to pursue their course without any other deviation.

Reason was too often prevailed upon so far by these promises, as to venture her charge within the eddy of the gulf of Intemperance, where, indeed, the circumvolution was weak, but yet interrupted the course of the vessel, and drew it, by insensible rotations, towards the centre. She then repented her temerity, and with all her force endeavoured to retreat; but the draught of the gulf was generally too strong to be overcome; and the passenger, having danced in circles with a pleasing and giddy velocity, was at last overwhelmed and lost. Those few whom Reason was able to extricate, generally suffered so many shocks upon the points which shot out from the rocks of Pleasure, that they were unable to continue their course with the same strength and facility as before, but floated along timorously and feebly, endangered by every breeze, and shattered by every ruffle of the water, till they sunk, by slow degrees, after long struggles and innumerable expedients, always repining at their own folly, and warning others against the first approach of the gulf of Intemperance.

There were artists who professed to repair the breaches and stop the leaks of the vessels which had been shattered on the rocks of Pleasure. Many appeared to have great confidence in their skill, and some, indeed, were preserved by it from sinking, who had received only a single blow; but I remarked, that few vessels lasted long which had been much repaired, nor was it found that the artists themselves continued afloat longer than those who had least of their assistance.

The only advantage which, in the voyage of Life, the cautious had above the negligent, was, that they sunk later, and more suddenly; for they passed forward till they had sometimes seen all those in whose company they had issued from the straits of Infancy, perish in the way, and at last were overset by a cross breeze, without the toil of resistance, or the anguish of expectation. But such as had often fallen against the rocks of Pleasure, commonly subsided by sensible degrees, contended long with the encroaching waters, and harassed themselves by labours that scarce Hope herself could flatter with success.

As I was looking upon the various fate of the multitude about me, I was suddenly alarmed with an admonition from some unknown power, "Gaze not idly upon others when thou thyself art sinking. Whence is this thoughtless tranquillity, when thou and they are equally endangered?" I looked, and seeing the gulf of Intemperance before me, started and awaked. *Rambler.*

§ 3. *The Journey of a Day, a Picture of Human Life; the Story of Obidah.*

Obidah, the son of Abensina, left the caravansera early in the morning, and pursued his journey through the plains of Indostan. He was fresh and vigorous with rest; he was animated with hope; he was incited by desire; he walked swiftly forward over the valleys, and saw the hills gradually rising before him. As he passed along, his ears were delighted with the morning song of the bird of paradise, he was fanned by the last flutters of the sinking breeze, and sprinkled with dew by groves of spices; he sometimes contemplated the towering height of the oak, monarch of the hills; and sometimes caught the gentle fragrance of the primrose, eldest daughter of the spring: all his senses were gratified, and all care was banished from the heart.

Thus he went on till the sun approached his meridian, and the increasing heat preyed upon his strength; he then looked round about him for some more commodious path. He saw, on his right hand, a grove that seemed to wave its shades as a sign of invitation; he entered it, and found the coolness and verdure irresistibly pleasant. He did not, however, forget whither he was travelling, but found a narrow way bordered with flowers, which appeared to have the same direction with the main road, and was pleased that, by this happy experiment, he had found means to unite pleasure with business, and to gain the rewards of diligence, without suffering its fatigues. He, therefore, still continued to walk for a time, without the least remission of his ardour, except that he was sometimes tempted to stop by the music of the birds, whom the heat had assembled in the shade, and sometimes amused himself with plucking the flowers that covered the banks on either side, or the fruits that hung upon the branches. At last the green path began to decline from its first tendency, and to wind among hills and thickets, cooled with fountains, and murmuring with water-falls. Here Obidah paused for a time, and began to consider whether it were longer safe to forsake the known and common track; but remembering that the heat was now in its greatest violence, and that the plain was dusty and uneven, he resolved to pursue the new path, which he supposed only to make a few meanders, in compliance with the varieties of the ground, and to end at last in the common road.

Having thus calmed his solicitude, he renewed his pace, though he suspected that he was not gaining ground. This uneasines of his mind inclined him to lay hold on every new object, and give way to every sensation that might sooth or divert him. He listened to every echo; he mounted every hill for a fresh prospect; he turned aside to every cascade, and pleased himself with tracing the course of a gentle river that rolled among the trees, and watered a large region with innumerable circumvolutions. In these amusements the hours passed away uncounted, his deviations had perplexed his memory, and he knew not towards what point to travel. He stood pensive and confused, afraid to go forward lest he should go wrong, yet conscious that the time of loitering was now past. While he was thus tortured with uncertainty, the sky was overspread with clouds, the day vanished from before him, and a sudden tempest gathered round his head. He was now roused by his danger, to a quick and painful remembrance of his folly; he now saw how happiness is lost, when ease is consulted; he lamented the unmanly impatience that prompted him to seek shelter in the grove, and despised the petty curiosity that led him on from trifle to trifle. While he was thus reflecting, the air grew blacker, and a clap of thunder broke his meditation.

He now resolved to do what remained yet in his power; to tread back the ground which he had passed, and try to find some issue where the wood might open into the plain. He prostrated himself on the ground, and commended his life to the Lord of nature. He rose with confidence and tranquillity, and pressed on with his sabre in his hand, for the beasts of the desert were in motion, and on every hand were heard the mingled howls of rage and fear, and ravage and expiration; all the horrors of darkness and solitude surrounded him; the winds roared in the woods, and the torrents tumbled from the hills.

Thus forlorn and distressed, he wandered through the wild, without knowing whither he was going, or whether he was every moment drawing nearer to safety or to destruction. At length, not fear, but labour, began to overcome him; his breath grew short, and his knees trembled, and he was on the point of lying down in resignation to his fate, when he beheld through the brambles the glimmer of a taper. He advanced towards the light, and finding that it proceeded from the cottage of a hermit, he called humbly at the door, and obtained admission. The old man set before him such provisions as he had collected for himself, on which Obidah fed with eagerness and gratitude.

When the repast was over, "Tell me," said the hermit, "by what chance thou hast been brought hither; I have been now twenty years an inhabitant of the wilderness, in which I never saw a man before." Obidah then related the occurrences of his journey, without any concealment or palliation.

"Son," said the hermit, "let the errors and follies, the dangers and escape of this day, sink deep into thy heart. Remember, my son, that human life is the journey of a day. We rise in the morning of youth, full of vigour, and full of expectation; we set forward with spirit and hope, with gaiety and with diligence, and travel on a while in the straight road of piety towards the mansions of rest. In a short time we remit our fervour, and endeavour to find some mitigation of our duty, and some more easy means of obtaining the same end. We then relax our vigour, and resolve no longer to be terrified with crimes at a distance, but rely upon our own constancy, and venture to approach what we resolve never to touch. We thus enter the bowers of ease, and repose in the shades of security. Here the heart softens, and vigilance subsides; we are then willing to inquire whether another advance cannot be made, and whether we may not, at least, turn our eyes upon the gardens of pleasure. We approach them with scruple and hesitation; we enter them, but enter timorous and trembling, and always hope to pass through them without losing the road of virtue, which we, for a while, keep in our sight, and to which we propose to return. But temptation succeeds temptation, and one compliance prepares us for another; we in time lose the happiness of innocence, and solace our disquiet with sensual gratifications. By degrees we let fall the remembrance of our original intention, and quit the only adequate object of rational desire. We entangle ourselves in business, immerge ourselves in luxury, and rove through the labyrinths of inconstancy, till the darkness of old age begins to invade us, and disease and anxiety obstruct our way. We then look back upon our lives with horror, with sorrow, with repentance; and wish, but too often vainly wish, that we had not forsaken the ways of virtue. Happy are they, my son, who shall learn from thy example not to despair, but shall remember, that though the day is past, and their strength is wasted, there yet remains one effort to be made; that reformation is never hopeless, nor sincere endeavours ever unassisted; that the wanderer may at length return, after all his errors; and that he who implores strength and courage from above, shall find danger and difficulty give way before him. Go now, my son, to thy repose; commit thyself to the care of Omnipotence; and when the morning calls again to toil, begin anew thy journey and thy life."

Rambler.

§ 4. *The Advantages of a good Education.*

I consider a human soul without education like marble in the quarry, which shows none of its inherent beauties, until the skill of the polisher fetches out the colours, makes the surface shine, and discovers every ornamental cloud, spot, and vein, that runs through the body of it. Education, after the same manner, when it works upon a noble mind, draws out to view every latent virtue and perfection, which, without such helps, are never able to make their appearance.

If my reader will give me leave to

change the allusion so soon upon him, I shall make use of the same instance to illustrate the force of education, which Aristotle has brought to explain his doctrine of substantial forms, when he tells us that a statue lies hid in a block of marble; and that the art of the statuary only clears away the superfluous matter, and removes the rubbish. The figure is in the stone, and the sculptor only finds it. What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to a human soul. The philosopher, the saint, or the hero, the wise, the good, or the great man, very often lie hid and concealed in a plebeian, which a proper education might have dis-interred, and have brought to light. I am therefore much delighted with reading the accounts of savage nations, and with contemplating those virtues which are wild and uncultivated; to see courage exerting itself in fierceness, resolution in obstinacy, wisdom in cunning, patience in sullenness and despair.

Men's passions operate variously, and appear in different kinds of actions, according as they are more or less rectified and swayed by reason. When one hears of negroes, who upon the death of their masters, or upon changing their service, hang themselves upon the next tree, as it frequently happens in our American plantations, who can forbear admiring their fidelity, though it expresses itself in so dreadful a manner? What might not that savage greatness of soul, which appears in these poor wretches on many occasions, be raised to, were it rightly cultivated? And what colour of excuse can there be for the contempt with which we treat this part of our species; that we should not put them upon the common foot of humanity; that we should only set an insignificant fine upon the man who murders them; nay, that we should, as much as in us lies, cut them off from the prospects of happiness in another world, as well as in this, and deny them that which we look upon as the proper means for attaining it!

It is therefore an unspeakable blessing to be born in those parts of the world where wisdom and knowledge flourish; though it must be confessed there are, even in these parts, several poor uninstructed persons, who are but little above the inhabitants of those nations of which I have been here speaking; as those who have had the advantages of a more liberal education, rise above one another by several different degrees of perfection. For, to return to our statue in the block of marble, we see it sometimes only begun to be chipped, sometimes rough-hewn, and but just sketched into a human figure; sometimes we see the man appearing distinctly in all his limbs and features; sometimes we find the figure wrought up to great elegancy; but seldom meet with any to which the hand of a Phidias or a Praxiteles could not give several nice touches and finishings. *Spectator.*

§ 5. *The Disadvantages of a bad Education.*

Sir, I was condemned by some disastrous influence to be an only son, born to the apparent prospect of a large fortune, and allotted to my parents at that time of life when satiety of common diversions allows the mind to indulge parental affection with greater intenseness. My birth was celebrated by the tenants with feasts, and dances, and bagpipes; congratulations were sent from every family within ten miles round; and my parents discovered, in my first cries, such tokens of future virtue and understanding, that they declared themselves determined to devote the remaining part of life to my happiness, and the increase of their estate.

The abilities of my father and mother were not perceptibly unequal, and education had given neither much advantage over the other. They had both kept good company, rattled in chariots, glittered in playhouses, and danced at court, and were both expert in the games that were in their times called in as auxiliaries against the intrusion of thought.

When there is such a parity between two persons associated for life, the dejection which the husband, if he be not completely stupid, must always suffer for want of superiority, sinks him to submissiveness. My mamma therefore governed the family without control; and, except that my father still retained some authority in the stables, and now and then, after a supernumerary bottle, broke a looking-glass or china-dish to prove his sovereignty, the whole course of the year was regulated by her direction, the servants received from her all their orders, and the tenants were continued or dismissed at her discretion.

She therefore thought herself entitled to the superintendence of her son's education; and when my father, at the instigation of the parson, faintly proposed that I should be sent to school, very positively told him, that she would not suffer a fine child to be ruined; that she never knew any boys at a grammar-school, that could come into a room without blushing, or sit at the table without some awkward uneasiness; that they were always putting themselves into danger by boisterous plays, or vitiating their behaviour with mean company; and that, for her part, she would rather follow me to the grave, than see me tear my clothes, and hang down my head, and sneak about with dirty shoes and blotted fingers, my hair unpowdered, and my hat uncocked.

My father, who had no other end in his proposal than to appear wise and manly, soon acquiesced, since I was not to live by my learning; for indeed, he had known very few students that had not some stiffness in their manner. They therefore agreed, that a domestic tutor should be procured; and hired an honest gentleman of mean conversation and narrow sentiments, but whom having passed the common forms of literary education, they implicitly concluded qualified to teach all that was to be learned from a scholar. He thought himself sufficiently exalted by being placed at the same table with his pupil, and had no other view than to perpetuate his felicity by the utmost flexibility of submission to all my mother's opinions and caprices. He frequently took away my book, lest I should mope with too much application, charged me never to write without turning up my ruffles, and generally brushed my coat before he dismissed me into the parlour.

He had no occasion to complain of too burthensome an employment; for my mother very judiciously considered, that I was not likely to grow politer in his company, and suffered me not to pass any more time in his apartment than my lesson required. When I was summoned to my task, she enjoined me not to get any of my tutor's ways, who was seldom mentioned before me but for practices to be avoided. I was every moment admonished not to lean on my chair, cross my legs, or swing my hands like my tutor; and once my mother very seriously deliberated upon his total dismission, because I began, she said, to learn his manner of sticking on my hat, and had his bend in my shoulders, and his totter in my gait.

Such, however, was her care, that I escaped all these depravities; and when I was only twelve years old, had rid myself of every appearance of childish diffidence. I was celebrated round the country for the petulance of my remarks, and the quickness of my replies; and many a scholar five years older than myself, have I dashed into confusion by the steadiness of my countenance, silenced by my readiness of repartee, and tortured with envy by the address with which I picked up a fan, presented a snuff-box, or received an empty tea-cup.

At fourteen I was completely skilled in all the niceties of dress, and I could not only enumerate all the variety of silks, and distinguish the product of a French loom, but dart my eye through a numerous company, and observe every deviation from the reigning mode. I was universally skilful in all the changes of expensive finery; but as every one, they say, has something to which he is particularly born, was eminently knowing in Brussels lace.

The next year saw me advanced to the trust and power of adjusting the ceremonial of an assembly. All received their partners from my hand, and to me every stranger applied for introduction. My heart now disdained the instructions of a tutor; who was rewarded with a small annuity for life, and left me qualified, in my own opinion, to govern myself.

In a short time I came to London, and as my father was well known among the higher classes of life, soon obtained admission to the most splendid assemblies, and most crowded card-tables. Here I found myself universally caressed and applauded; the ladies praised the fancy of my clothes, the beauty of my form, and the softness of my voice; endeavoured in every place to force themselves to my notice; and invited, by a thousand oblique solicitations, my attendance to the play-house, and my salutations in the Park. I was now happy to the utmost extent of my conception; I passed every morning in dress, every afternoon in visits, and every night in some select assemblies, where neither care nor knowledge were suffered to molest us.

After a few years, however, these delights became familiar, and I had leisure to look round me with more attention. I then found that my flatterers had very little power to relieve the languor of satiety, or recreate weariness, by varied amusement; and therefore endeavoured to enlarge the sphere of my pleasures, and to try what satisfaction might be found in the society of men. I will not deny the mortification with which I perceived that every man whose name I had heard mentioned with respect, received me with a kind of tenderness nearly bordering on compassion; and that those whose reputation was not well established, thought it necessary to justify their understandings, by treating me with contempt. One of these witlings elevated his crest, by asking me in a full coffee-house the price of patches; and another whispered, that he wondered Miss Frisk did not keep me that afternoon to watch her squirrel.

When I found myself thus hunted from all masculine conversation by those who were themselves barely admitted, I returned to the ladies, and resolved to dedicate my life to their service and their pleasure. But I find that I have now lost my charms. Of those with whom I entered the gay world, some are married, some have retired, and some have so much changed their opinion, that they scarcely pay any regard to my civilities, if there is any other man in the place. The new flight of beauties, to whom I have made my addresses, suffer me to pay the treat, and then titter with boys. So that I now find myself welcome only to a few grave ladies, who, unacquainted with all that gives either use or dignity to life, are content to pass their hours between their bed and their cards, without esteem from the old, or reverence from the young.

I cannot but think, Mr. Rambler, that I have reason to complain; for surely the females ought to pay some regard to the age of him whose youth was passed in endeavours to please them. They that encourage folly in the boy, have no right to punish it in the man. Yet I find, that though they lavish their first fondness upon pertness and gaiety, they soon transfer their regard to other qualities, and ungratefully abandon their adorers to dream out their last years in stupidity and contempt.

I am, &c. Florentulus.

Rambler.

§ 6. *Omniscience and Omnipresence of the Deity, together with the Immensity of his Works.*

I was yesterday, about sun-set, walking in the open fields, till the night insensibly fell upon me. I at first amused myself with all the richness and variety of colours which appeared in the western parts of heaven: in proportion as they faded away and went out, several stars and planets appeared one after another, till the whole firmament was in a glow. The blueness of the ether was exceedingly heightened and enlivened by the season of the year, and the rays of all those luminaries that passed through it. The galaxy appeared in its most beautiful white. To complete the scene, the full moon arose at length in that clouded majesty which Milton takes notice of, and opened to the eye a new picture of nature, which was more finely shaded, and disposed among softer lights, than that which the sun had before discovered to us.

As I was surveying the moon walking in her brightness, and taking her progress among the constellations, a thought arose in me, which I believe very often perplexes and disturbs men of serious and contemplative natures. David himself fell into it in that reflection, "When I consider the heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou regardest him!" In the same manner, when I consider that infinite host of stars, or, to speak more philosophically, of suns, which were then shining upon me, with those innumerable sets of planets or worlds, which were moving round their respective suns; when I still enlarged the idea, and supposed another heaven of suns and worlds rising still above this which we discovered, and these still enlightened by a superior firmament of luminaries, which are planted at so great a distance, that they may appear to the inhabitants of the former as the stars do to us; in short, while I pursued this thought, I could not but reflect on that little insignificant figure which I myself bore amidst the immensity of God's works.

Were the sun, which enlightens this part of the creation, with all the host of planetary worlds that move about him, utterly extinguished and annihilated, they would not be missed, more than a grain of sand upon the sea-shore. The space they possess is so exceedingly little in comparison of the whole, it would scarce make a blank in the creation. The chasm would be imperceptible to an eye, that could take in the whole compass of nature, and pass from one end of the creation to the other: as it is possible there may be such a sense in ourselves hereafter, or in creatures which are at present more exalted than ourselves. We see many stars by the help of glasses, which we do not discover with our naked eyes; and the finer our telescopes are, the more still are our discoveries. Huygenius carries this thought so far, that he does not think it impossible there may be stars whose light is not yet travelled down to us since their first creation. There is no question but the universe has certain bounds set to it; but when we consider that it is the work of infinite power, prompted by infinite goodness, with an infinite space to exert itself in, how can our imagination set any bounds to it?

To return, therefore, to my first thought, I could not but look upon myself with secret horror, as a being that was not worth the smallest regard of one who had so great a work under his care and superintendency. I was afraid of being overlooked amidst the immensity of nature, and lost among that infinite variety of creatures, which, in all probability, swarm through all these immeasurable regions of matter.

In order to recover myself from this mortifying thought, I considered that it took its rise from those narrow conceptions, which we are apt to entertain of the divine nature. We ourselves cannot attend to many different objects at the same time. If we are careful to inspect some things, we must of course neglect others. This imperfection which we observe in ourselves, is an imperfection that cleaves in some degree to creatures of the highest capacities, as they are creatures, that is, beings of finite and limited natures. The presence of every created being is confined to a certain measure of space, and consequently his observation is stinted to a certain number of objects. The sphere in which we move, and act, and understand, is of a wider circumference to one creature than another, according as we rise one above another in the scale of existence. But the widest of these our spheres has its circumference. When therefore we reflect on the divine nature, we are so used and accustomed to this imperfection in ourselves, that we cannot forbear in some measure ascribing it to him in whom there is no shadow of imperfection. Our reason indeed assures us, that his attributes are infinite: but the poorness of our conceptions is such, that it cannot forbear setting bounds to every thing it contemplates, till our reason comes again to our succour, and throws down all those little prejudices which rise in us unawares, and are natural to the mind of man.

We shall therefore utterly extinguish this melancholy thought, of our being over-looked by our Maker in the multiplicity of his works, and the infinity of those objects among which he seems to be incessantly employed, if we consider, in the first place, that he is omnipresent; and in the second, that he is omniscient.

If we consider him in his omnipresence: his being passes through, actuates, and supports the whole frame of nature. His creation, and every part of it, is full of him. There is nothing he has made, that is either so distant, so little, or so inconsiderable, which he does not essentially inhabit. His substance is within the substance of every being, whether material or immaterial, and as intimately present to it, as that being is to itself. It would be an imperfection in him, were he able to move out of one place into another, or to draw himself from any thing he has created, or from any part of that space which he diffused and spread abroad to infinity. In short, to speak of him in the language of the old philosophers, he is a being whose centre is every where, and his circumference no where.

In the second place, he is omniscient as well as omnipresent. His omniscience indeed necessarily and naturally flows from his omnipresence. He cannot but be conscious of every motion that arises in the whole material world, which he thus essentially pervades; and of every thought that is stirring in the intellectual world, to every part of which he is thus intimately united. Several moralists have considered the creation as the temple of God, which he has built with his own hands, and which is filled with his presence. Others have considered infinite space as the receptacle, or rather the habitation of the Almighty: but the noblest and most exalted way of considering this infinite space, is that of Sir Isaac Newton, who calls it the *sensorium* of the Godhead. Brutes and men have their *sensoriola,* or little *sensoriums,* by which they apprehend the presence and perceive the actions of a few objects, that lie contiguous to them. Their knowledge and observation turn within a very narrow circle. But as God Almighty cannot but perceive and know every thing in which he resides, infinite space gives room to infinite knowledge, and is, as it were, an organ to omniscience.

Were the soul separate from the body, and with one glance of thought should start beyond the bounds of the creation, should it for millions of years continue its progress through infinite space with the same activity, it would still find itself within the embrace of its Creator, and encompassed round with the immensity of the Godhead. While we are in the body he is not less present with us, because he is concealed from us. "Oh that I knew where I might find him! (says Job.) Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he does work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him." In short, reason as well as revelation, assure us, that he cannot be absent from us, notwithstanding he is undiscovered by us.

In this consideration of God Almighty's omnipresence and omniscience, every uncomfortable thought vanishes. He cannot but regard every thing that has being, especially such of his creatures who fear they are not regarded by him. He is privy to all their thoughts, and to that anxiety of heart in particular, which is apt to trouble them on this occasion; for, as it is impossible he should overlook any of his creatures; so we may be confident that he regards, with an eye of mercy, those who endeavour to recommend themselves to his notice, and in unfeigned humility of heart think themselves unworthy that he should be mindful of them. *Spectator.*

§ 7. *On the Immortality of the Soul.*

I was yesterday walking alone in one of my friend's woods, and lost myself in it very agreeably, as I was running over in my mind the several arguments that establish this great point, which is the basis of morality, and the source of all the pleasing hopes and secret joys that can arise in the heart of a reasonable creature. I considered those several proofs drawn,

First, from the nature of the soul itself, and particularly its immateriality; which, though not absolutely necessary to the eternity of its duration, has, I think, been evinced to almost a demonstration.

Secondly, from its passions and sentiments, as particularly from its love of existence, its horror of annihilation, and its hopes of immortality, with that secret satisfaction which it finds in the practice of virtue, and that uneasiness which follows in it upon the commission of vice.

Thirdly, from the nature of the Supreme Being, whose justice, goodness, wisdom, and veracity, are all concerned in this point.

But among these and other excellent arguments for the immortality of the soul, there is one drawn from the perpetual progress of the soul to its perfection, without a possibility of ever arriving at it; which is a hint that I do not remember to have seen opened and improved by others who have written on this subject, though it seems to me to carry a very great weight with it. How can it enter into the thoughts of man, that the soul, which is capable of such immense perfections, and of receiving new improvements to all eternity, shall fall away into nothing almost as soon as it is created? Are such abilities made for no purpose? A brute arrives at a point of perfection that he can never pass: in a few years he has all the endowments he is capable of; and were he to live ten thousand more, would be the same thing he is at present. Were a human soul thus at a stand in her accomplishments, were her faculties to be full blown, and incapable of farther enlargements, I could imagine it might fall away insensibly, and drop at once into a state of annihilation. But can we believe a thinking being, that is in a perpetual progress of improvements, and travelling on from perfection to perfection, after having just looked abroad into the works of its Creator, and made a few discoveries of his infinite goodness, wisdom, and power, must perish at her first setting out, and in the very beginning of her inquiries?

A man, considered in his present state, seems only sent into the world to propagate his kind. He provides himself with a successor, and immediately quits his post to make room for him. He does not seem born to enjoy life, but to deliver it down to others. This is not surprising to consider in animals, which are formed for our use, and can finish their business in a short life. The silk-worm, after having spun her task, lays her eggs and dies. But a man can never have taken in his full measure of knowledge, has not time to subdue his passions, establish his soul in virtue, and come up to the perfection of his nature, before he is hurried off the stage. Would an infinitely wise being make such glorious creatures for so mean a purpose? Can he delight in the production of such abortive intelligences, such short-lived reasonable beings? Would he give us talents that are not to be exerted? capacities that are never to be gratified? How can we find that wisdom which shines through all his works, in the formation of man, without looking on this world as only a nursery for the next, and believing that the several generations of rational creatures, which rise up and disappear in such quick successions, are only to receive their first rudiments of existence here, and afterwards to be transplanted into a more friendly climate, where they may spread and flourish to all eternity?

There is, not in my opinion, a more pleasing and triumphant consideration in religion, than this of the perpetual progress which the soul makes towards the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the soul as going on from strength to strength, to consider that she is to shine for ever with new accessions of glory, and brighten to all eternity; that she will be still adding virtue to virtue, and knowledge to knowledge; carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it must be a prospect pleasing to God himself, to see his creation for ever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him, by greater degrees of resemblance.

Methinks this single consideration, of the progress of a finite spirit to perfection, will be sufficient to extinguish all envy in inferior natures, and all contempt in superior. That cherubim, which now appears as a God to a human soul, knows very well that the period will come about in eternity, when the human soul shall be as perfect as he himself now is: nay, when she shall look down upon that degree of perfection as much as she now falls short of it. It is true, the higher nature still advances, and by that means preserves his distance and superiority in the scale of being; but he knows that, how high soever the station is of which he stands possessed at present, the inferior nature will at length mount up to it, and shine forth in the same degree of glory.

With what astonishment and veneration may we look into our own souls, where there are such hidden stores of virtue and knowledge, such inexhausted sources of perfection! We know not yet what we shall be, nor will it ever enter into the heart of man to conceive the glory that will be always in reserve for him. The soul, considered with its Creator, is like one of those mathematical lines that may draw nearer to another for all eternity without a possibility of touching it: and can there be a thought so transporting as to consider ourselves in these perpetual approaches to him, who is not only the standard of perfection, but of happiness! *Spectator.*

§ 8. *The Duty of Children to their Parents.*

I am the happy father of a very towardly son, in whom I do not only see my life, but also my manner of life renewed. It would be extremely beneficial to society, if you would frequently resume subjects which serve to bind these sort of relations faster, and endear the ties of blood with those of good-will, protection, observance, indulgence, and veneration. I would, methinks, have this done after an uncommon method; and do not think any one, who is not capable of writing a good play, fit to undertake a work wherein there will necessarily occur so many secret instincts and biases of human nature, which would pass unobserved by common eyes. I thank Heaven I have no outrageous offence against my own excellent parents to answer for; but when I am now and then alone, and look back upon my past life, from my earliest infancy to this time, there are many faults which I committed that did not appear to me, even until I myself became a father. I had not until then a notion of the yearnings of heart, which a man has when he sees his child do a laudable thing, or the sudden damp which seizes him when he fears he will act something unworthy. It is not to be imagined what a remorse touched me for a long train of childish negligences of my mother, when I saw my wife the other day look out of the window, and turn as pale as ashes upon seeing my younger boy sliding upon the ice. These slight intimations will give you to understand, that there are numberless little crimes, which children take no notice of while they are doing, which, upon reflection, when they shall themselves become fathers, they will look upon with the utmost sorrow and contrition, that they did not regard, before those whom they offended were to be no more seen. How many thousand things do I remember, which would have highly pleased my father, and I omitted for no other reason but that I thought what he proposed the effect of humour and old age, which I am now convinced had reason and good sense in it! I cannot now go into the parlour to him, and make his heart glad with an account of a matter which was of no consequence, but that I told it and acted in it. The good man and woman are long since in their graves, who used to sit and plot the welfare of us their children, while, perhaps, we were sometimes laughing at the old folks at another end of the house. The truth of it is, were we merely to follow nature in these great duties of life, though we have a strong instinct towards the performing of them, we should be on both sides very deficient. Age is so unwelcome to the generality of mankind, and growth towards manhood so desirable to all, that resignation to decay is too difficult a task in the father; and deference, amidst the impulse of gay desires, appears unreasonable to the son. There are so few who can grow old with a good grace, and yet fewer who can come slow enough into the world, that a father, were he to be actuated by his desires, and a son, were he to consult himself only, could neither of them behave himself as he ought to the other. But when reason interposes against instinct, where it would carry either out of the interests of the other, there arises that happiest intercourse of good offices between those dearest relations of human life. The father, according to the opportunities which are offered to him, is throwing down blessings on the son, and the son endeavouring to appear the worthy offspring of such a father. It is after this manner that Camillus and his first-born dwell together. Camillus enjoys a pleasing and indolent old age, in which passion is subdued, and reason exalted. He waits the day of his dissolution with a resignation mixed with delight, and the son fears the accession of his father's fortune with diffidence, lest he should not enjoy or become it as well as his predecessor. Add to this, that the father knows he leaves a friend to the children of his friends, an easy landlord to his tenants, and an agreeable companion to his acquaintance. He believes his son's behaviour will make him frequently remembered, but never wanted. This commerce is so well cemented, that without the pomp of saying, Son, be a friend to such a one when I am gone; Camillus knows, being in his favour is direction enough to the grateful youth who is to succeed him, without the admonition of his mentioning it. These gentlemen are honoured in all their neighbourhood, and the same effect which the court has on the manners of a kingdom, their characters have on all who live within the influence of them.

My son and I are not of fortune to communicate our good actions or intentions to so many as these gentlemen do; but I will be bold to say, my son has, by the applause and approbation which his behaviour towards me has gained him, occasioned that many an old man, besides myself, has rejoiced. Other men's children follow the example of mine; and I have the inexpressible happiness of overhearing our neighbours, as we ride by, point to their children, and say, with a voice of joy, "There they go." *Spectator.*

§ 9. *The Strength of Parental Affection.*

I went the other day to visit Eliza, who, in the perfect bloom of beauty, is the mother of several children. She had a little prating girl upon her lap, who was begging to be very fine, that she might go abroad; and the indulgent mother, at her little daughter's request, had just taken the knots off her own head to adorn the hair of the pretty trifler. A smiling boy was at the same time caressing a lap-dog, which is their mother's favourite, because it pleases the children; and she, with a delight in her looks, which heightened her beauty, so divided her conversation with the two pretty prattlers, as to make them both equally cheerful.

As I came in, she said, with a blush, "Mr. Ironside, though you are an old bachelor, you must not laugh at my tenderness to my children." I need not tell my reader what civil things I said in answer to the lady, whose matron-like behaviour gave me infinite satisfaction: since I myself take great pleasure in playing with children, and am seldom unprovided of plums or marbles, to make my court to such entertaining companions.

Whence is it, said I to myself when I was alone, that the affection of parents is so intense to their offspring? Is it because they generally find such resemblances in what they have produced, as that thereby they think themselves renewed in their children, and are willing to transmit themselves to future times? or is it because they think themselves obliged by the dictates of humanity to nourish and rear what is placed so immediately under their protection; and what by their means is brought into this world, the scene of misery, of necessity? These will not come up to it. Is it not rather the good providence of that Being, who in a supereminent degree protects and cherishes the whole race of mankind, his sons and creatures? How shall we, any other way, account for this natural affection, so signally displayed throughout every species of the animal creation, without which the course of nature would quickly fail, and every various kind be extinct? Instances of tenderness in the most savage brutes are so frequent, that quotations of that kind are altogether unnecessary.

If we, who have no particular concern in them, take a secret delight in observing the gentle dawn of reason in babes; if our ears are soothed with their half-forming and aiming at articulate sounds; if we are charmed with their pretty mimicry, and surprised at the unexpected starts of wit and cunning in these miniatures of man: what transport may we imagine in the breasts of those, into whom natural instinct hath poured tenderness and fondness for them! how amiable is such a weakness of human nature! or rather, how great a weakness is it to give humanity so reproachful a name! The bare consideration of paternal affection should, methinks, create a more grateful tenderness in children towards their parents, than we generally see; and the silent whispers of nature be attended to, though the laws of God and man did not call aloud.

These silent whispers of nature have had a marvellous power, even when their cause hath been unknown. There are several examples in story, of tender friendships formed betwixt men, who knew not of their near relation: such accounts confirm me in an opinion I have long entertained, that there is a sympathy betwixt souls, which cannot be explained by the prejudice of education, the sense of duty, or any other human motive.

The memoirs of a certain French nobleman, which now lie before me, furnish me with a very entertaining instance of this secret attraction, implanted by Providence in the human soul. It will be necessary to inform the reader, that the person whose story I am going to relate, was one, whose roving and romantic temper, joined to a disposition singularly amorous, had led him through a vast variety of gallantries and amours. He had, in his youth, attended a princess of France into Poland, where he had been entertained by the king her husband, and married the daughter of a grandee. Upon her death he returned into his native country; where his intrigues and other misfortunes having consumed his paternal estate, he now went to take care of the fortune his deceased wife had left him in Poland. In his journey he was robbed before he reached Warsaw, and lay ill of a fever, when he met with the following adventure; which I shall relate in his own words.

"I had been in this condition for four days, when the countess of Venoski passed that way. She was informed that a stranger of good fashion lay sick, and her charity led her to see me. I remembered her, for I had often seen her with my wife, to whom she was nearly related; but when I found she knew me not, I thought fit to conceal my name. I told her I was a German; that I had been robbed; and that if she had the charity to send me to Warsaw, the queen would acknowledge it, I having the honour to be known to her majesty. The countess had the goodness to take compassion of me, and ordering me to be put into a litter, carried me to Warsaw, where I was lodged in her house until my health should allow me to wait on the queen.

"My fever increased after my journey was over, and I was confined to my bed for fifteen days. When the countess first saw me, she had a young lady with her, about eighteen years of age, who was much taller and better shaped than the Polish women generally are. She was very fair, her skin exceedingly fine, and her air and shape inexpressibly beautiful. I was not so sick as to overlook this young beauty; and I felt in my heart such emotions at the first view, as made me fear that all my misfortunes had not armed me sufficiently against the charms of the fair sex.

"The amiable creature seemed afflicted at my sickness; and she appeared to have so much concern and care for me, as raised in me a great inclination and tenderness for her. She came every day into my chamber to inquire after my health; I asked who she was, and I was answered, that she was niece to the countess of Venoski.

"I verily believe that the constant sight of this charming maid, and the pleasure I received from her careful attendance, contributed more to my recovery than all the medicines the physicians gave me. In short, my fever left me, and I had the satisfaction to see the lovely creature overjoyed at my recovery. She came to see me oftener as I grew better; and I already felt a stronger and more tender affection for her, than I ever bore to any woman in my life; when I began to perceive that her constant care of me was only a blind, to give her an opportunity of seeing a young Pole whom I took to be her lover. He seemed to be much about her age, of a brown complexion, very tall, but finely shaped. Every time she came to see me, the young gentleman came to find her out; and they usually retired to a corner of the chamber, where they seemed to converse with great earnestness. The aspect of the youth pleased me wonderfully; and if I had not suspected that he was my rival, I should have taken delight in his person and friendship.

"They both of them often asked me if I were in reality a German? which when I continued to affirm, they seemed very much troubled. One day I took notice that the young lady and gentleman, having retired to a window, were very intent upon a picture; and that every now and then they cast their eyes upon me, as if they had found some resemblance betwixt that and my features. I could not forbear to ask the meaning of it; upon which the lady answered, that if I had been a Frenchman, she should have imagined that I was the person for whom the picture was drawn, because it exactly resembled me. I desired to see it. But how great was my surprise, when I found it to be the very painting which I had sent to the queen five years before, and which she commanded me to get drawn to be given to my children! After I had viewed the piece, I cast my eyes upon the young lady, and then upon the gentleman I had thought to be her lover. My heart beat, and I felt a secret emotion which filled me with wonder. I thought I traced in the two young persons some of my own features, and at that moment I said to myself, Are not these my children? The tears came into my eyes, and I was about to run and embrace them; but constraining myself with pain, I asked whose picture it was? The maid, perceiving that I could not speak without tears, fell a weeping. Her tears absolutely confirmed me in my opinion; and falling upon her neck, "Ah my dear child," said I, "yes, I am your father!" I could say no more. The youth seized my hands at the same time, and kissing, bathed them with his tears. Throughout my life, I never felt a joy equal to this; and it must be owned, that nature inspires more lively emotions and pleasing tenderness than the passions can possibly excite."

Spectator.

§ 10. *Remarks on the Swiftness of Time.*

The natural advantages which arise from the position of the earth which we inhabit, with respect to the other planets, afford much employment to mathematical speculation, by which it has been discovered, that no other conformation of the system could have given such commodious distributions of light and heat, or imparted fertility and pleasure to so great a part of a revolving sphere.

It may be perhaps observed by the moralist, with equal reason, that our globe seems particularly fitted for the residence of a Being, placed here only for a short time, whose task is to advance himself to a higher and happier state of existence, by unremitted vigilance of caution, and activity of virtue.

The duties required of man are such as human nature does not willingly perform, and such as those are inclined to delay who yet intend some time to fulfil them. It was therefore necessary that this universal reluctance should be counteracted, and the drowsiness of hesitation wakened into resolve; that the danger of procrastination should be always in view, and the fallacies of security be hourly detected.

To this end all the appearances of nature uniformly conspire. Whatever we see on every side, reminds us of the lapse of time and the flux of life. The day and night succeed each other, the rotation of seasons diversifies the year, the sun rises, attains the meridian, declines and sets; and the moon every night changes its form.

The day has been considered as an image of the year, and a year as the representation of life. The morning answers to the spring, and the spring to childhood and youth; the noon corresponds to the summer, and the summer to the strength of manhood. The evening is an emblem of autumn, and autumn of declining life. The night with its silence and darkness shows the winter, in which all the powers of vegetation are benumbed; and the winter points out the time when life shall cease, with its hopes and pleasures.

He that is carried forward, however swiftly, by a motion equable and easy, perceives not the change of place but by the variation of objects. If the wheel of life, which rolls thus silently along, passed on through undistinguishable uniformity, we should never mark its approaches to the end of the course. If one hour were like another; if the passage of the sun did not show that the day is wasting; if the change of seasons did not impress upon us the flight of the year; quantities of duration equal to days and years would glide unobserved.

If the parts of time were not variously coloured, we should never discern their departure or succession, but should live thoughtless of the past, and careless of the future, without will, and perhaps without power to compute the periods of life, or to compare the time which is already lost with that which may probably remain.

But the course of time is so visibly marked, that it is even observed by the passage, and by nations who have raised their minds very little above animal instinct: there are human beings, whose language does not supply them with works by which they can number five, but I have read of none that have not names for Day and Night, for Summer and Winter.

Yet it is certain that these admonitions of nature, however forcible, however importunate, are too often vain; and that many who mark with such accuracy the course of time, appear to have little sensibility of the decline of life. Every man has something to do which he neglects; every man has faults to conquer which he delays to combat.

So little do we accustom ourselves to consider the effects of time, that things necessary and certain often surprise us like unexpected contingencies. We leave the beauty in her bloom, and, after an absence of twenty years, wonder, at our return, to find her faded. We meet those whom we left children, and can scarcely persuade ourselves to treat them as men. The traveller visits in age those countries through which he rambled in his youth, and hopes for merriment at the old place. The man of business, wearied with unsatisfactory prosperity, retires to the town of his nativity, and expects to play away the last years with the companions of his childhood, and recover youth in the fields where he once was young.

From this inattention, so general and so mischievous, let it be every man's study to exempt himself. Let him that desires to see others happy, make haste to give while his gift can be enjoyed, and remember that every moment of delay takes away something from the value of his benefaction. And let him who proposes his own happiness, reflect, that while he forms his purpose the day rolls on, and "the night cometh, when no man can work." *Idler.*

§ 11. *The Folly of mis-spending Time.*

An ancient poet, unreasonably discontented at the present state of things, which his system of opinions obliged him to represent in its worst form, has observed of the earth, "That its greater part is covered by the uninhabitable ocean; that of the rest, some is encumbered with naked mountains, and some lost under barren sands; some scorched with unintermitted heat, and some petrified with perpetual frost; so that only a few regions remain for the production of fruits, the pasture of cattle, and the accommodation of man."

The same observation may be transferred to the time allotted us in our present state. When we have deducted all that is absorbed in sleep, all that is inevitably appropriated to the demands of nature, or irresistibly engrossed by the tyranny of custom; all that passes in regulating the superficial decorations of life, or is given up in the reciprocations of civility to the disposal of others; all that is torn from us by the violence of disease, or stolen imperceptibly away by lassitude and languor; we shall find that part of our duration very small of which we can truly call ourselves masters, or which we can spend wholly at our own choice. Many of our hours are lost in a rotation of petty cares, in a constant recurrence of the same employments;

many of our provisions for ease or happiness are always exhausted by the present day; and a great part of our existence serves no other purpose, than that of enabling us to enjoy the rest.

Of the few moments which are left in our disposal, it may reasonably be expected, that we should be so frugal, as to let none of them slip from us without some equivalent; and perhaps it might be found, that as the earth, however straitened by rocks and waters, is capable of producing more than all its inhabitants are able to consume, our lives, though much contracted by incidental distraction, would yet afford us a large space vacant to the exercise of reason and virtue; that we want not time, but diligence, for great performances; and that we squander much of our allowance, even while we think it sparing and insufficient.

This natural and necessary comminution of our lives, perhaps, often makes us insensible of the negligence with which we suffer them to slide away. We never consider ourselves as possessed at once of time sufficient for any great design, and therefore indulge ourselves in fortuitous amusements We think it unnecessary to take an account of a few supernumerary moments, which, however employed, could have produced little advantage, and which were exposed to a thousand chances of disturbance and interruption.

It is observable, that, either by nature or by habit, our faculties are fitted to images of a certain extent, to which we adjust great things by division, and little things by accumulation. Of extensive surfaces we can only take a survey, as the parts succeed one another; and atoms we cannot perceive, till they are united into masses. Thus we break the vast periods of time into centuries and years; and thus, if we would know the amount of moments, we must agglomerate them into days and weeks.

The proverbial oracles of our parsimonious ancestors have informed us, that the fatal waste of fortune is by small expenses, by the profusion of sums too little singly to alarm our caution, and which we never suffer ourselves to consider together. Of the same kind is the prodigality of life: he that hopes to look back hereafter with satisfaction upon past years, must learn to know the present value of single minutes, and endeavour to let no particle of time fall useless to the ground.

It is usual for those who are advised to the attainment of any new qualifications, to look upon themselves as required to change the general course of their conduct, to dismiss their business, and exclude pleasure, and to devote their days or nights to a particular attention. But all common degrees of excellence are attainable at a lower price; he that should steadily and resolutely assign to any science or language those interstitial vacancies which intervene in the most crowded variety of diversion or employment, would find every day new irradiations of knowledge, and discover how much more is to be hoped from frequency and perseverance, than from violent efforts and sudden desires; efforts which are soon remitted when they encounter difficulty, and desires which, if they are indulged too often, will shake off the authority of reason, and range capriciously from one object to another.

The disposition to defer every important design to a time of leisure, and a state of settled uniformity, proceeds generally from a false estimate of the human powers. If we except those gigantic and stupendous intelligences who are said to grasp a system by intuition, and bound forward from one series of conclusions to another, without regular steps through intermediate propositions, the most successful students make their advances in knowledge by short flights, between each of which the mind may lie at rest. For every single act of progression a short time is sufficient; and it is only necessary, that whenever that time is afforded, it be well employed. Few minds will be long confined to severe and laborious meditation; and when a successful attack on knowledge has been made, the student recreates himself with the contemplation of his conquest, and forbears another incursion till the new-acquired truth has become familiar, and his curiosity calls upon him for fresh gratifications. Whether the time of intermission is spent in company, or in solitude, in necessary business, or in voluntary levities, the understanding is equally abstracted from the object of inquiry; but, perhaps, if it be detained by occupations less pleasing, it returns again to study with greater alacrity than when it is glutted with ideal pleasures, and surfeited with intemperance of application. He that will not suffer himself to be discouraged by fancied impossibilities, may sometimes find his abilities invigorated by the necessity of exerting them in short intervals, as the force of a current is increased by the contraction of its channel.

From some cause like this, it has probably proceeded, that among those who have contributed to the advancement of learning, many have risen to eminence, in opposition to all the obstacles which external circumstances could place in their way, amidst the tumult of business, the distresses of poverty, or the dissipations of a wandering and unsettled state. A great part of the life of Erasmus was one continual peregrination: ill supplied with the gifts of fortune, and led from city to city, and from kingdom to kingdom, by the hopes of patrons and preferment, hopes which always flattered and always deceived him; he yet found means, by unshaken constancy, and a vigilant improvement of those hours, which, in the midst of the most restless activity, will remain unengaged, to write more than another in the same condition would have hoped to read. Compelled by want to attendance and solicitation, and so much versed in common life, that he has transmitted to us the most perfect delineation of the manners of his age, he joined to his knowledge of the world such application to books, that he will stand for ever in the first rank of literary heroes. How this proficiency was obtained, he sufficiently discovers, by informing us, that the Praise of Folly, one of his most celebrated performances, was composed by him on the road to Italy; *ne totum illud tempus quo equo fuit insidendum, illiteratis fabulis tereretur*, lest the hours which he was obliged to spend on horseback should be tattled away without regard to literature.

An Italian philosopher expressed in his motto, *that time was his estate;* an estate indeed, which will produce nothing without cultivation, but will always abundantly repay the labours of industry, and satisfy the most extensive desires, if no part of it be suffered to lie waste by negligence, to be over-run with noxious plants, or laid out for show rather than for use. *Rambler.*

§ 12. *The Importance of Time, and the proper Methods of spending it.*

We all of us complain of the shortness of time, saith Seneca, and yet have much more than we know what to do with. Our lives, says he, are spent either in doing nothing at all, or doing nothing to the purpose, or in doing nothing that we ought to do. We are always complaining our days are few, and acting as though there would be no end of them.

That noble philosopher has described our inconsistency with ourselves in this particular by all those various turns of expression and thought which are peculiar in his writings.

I often consider mankind as wholly inconsistent with itself, in a point that bears some affinity to the former. Though we seem grieved at the shortness of life, in general, we are wishing every period of it at an end. The minor longs to be at age, then to be a man of business, then to make up an estate, then to arrive at honours, then to retire. Thus, although the whole of life is allowed by every one to be short, the several divisions of it appear long and tedious. We are for lengthening our span in general, but would fain contract the parts of which it is composed. The usurer would be very well satisfied to have all the time annihilated that lies between the present moment and the next quarter-day. The politician would be contented to lose three years in his life, could he place things in the posture which he fancies they will stand in after such a revolution of time. The lover would be glad to strike out of his existence all the moments that are to pass away before the happy meeting. Thus, as fast as our time runs, we should be very glad, in most parts of our lives, that it ran much faster than it does. Several hours of the day hang upon our hands; nay, we wish away whole years, and travel through time, as through a country filled with many wild and empty wastes which we would fain hurry over, that we may arrive at those several little settlements or imaginary points of rest which are dispersed up and down in it.

If we divide the life of most men into twenty parts, we shall find that at least nineteen of them are mere gaps and chasms, which are neither filled with pleasure nor business. I do not however include in this calculation the life of those men who are in a perpetual hurry of affairs, but of those only who are not always engaged in scenes of action; and I hope I shall not do an unacceptable piece of service to these persons, if I point out to them certain methods for the filling up their empty spaces of life. The methods I shall propose to them are as follow:

The first is the exercise of virtue, in the most general acceptation of the word. That particular scheme which comprehends the social virtues, may give employment to the most industrious temper, and find a man business more than the most active station of life. To advise the ignorant, relieve the needy, comfort the afflicted, are duties that fall in our way almost every day of our lives. A man has frequent opportunities of mitigating the fierceness of a party; of doing justice to the character of a deserving man; of softening the envious, quieting the angry, and rectifying the prejudiced; which are all of them employments suitable to a reasonable nature, and bring great satisfaction to the person who can busy himself in them with discretion.

There is another kind of virtue that may find employment for those retired hours in which we are altogether left to ourselves, and destitute of company and conversation; I mean that intercourse and communication which every reasonable creature ought to maintain with the great Author of his being. The man who lives under an habitual sense of the divine presence, keeps up a perpetual cheerfulness of temper, and enjoys every moment the satisfaction of thinking himself in company with his dearest and best of friends. The time never lies heavy upon him: it is impossible for him to be alone. His thoughts and passions are the most busied at such hours when those of other men are the most inactive. He no sooner steps out of the world but his heart burns with devotion, swells with hope, and triumphs in the consciousness of that presence which every where surrounds him; or, on the contrary, pours out its fears, its sorrows, its apprehensions, to the great Supporter of its existence.

I have here only considered the necessity of a man's being virtuous, that he may have something to do; but if we consider further, that the exercise of virtue is not only an amusement for the time it lasts, but that its influence extends to those parts of our existence which lie beyond the grave, and that our whole eternity is to take its colour from those hours which we here employ in virtue or in vice, the argument redoubles upon us, for putting in practice this method of passing away our time.

When a man has but a little stock to improve, and has opportunities of turning it all to good account, what shall we think of him if he suffers nineteen parts of it to lie dead, and perhaps even employs the twentieth to his ruin or disadvantage?—But because the mind cannot be always in its fervours, nor strained up to a pitch of virtue, it is necessary to find out proper employments for it, in its relaxations.

The next method therefore that I would propose to fill up our time, should be useful and innocent diversions. I must confess I think it is below reasonable creatures to be altogether conversant in such diversions as are merely innocent, and have nothing else to recommend them, but that there is no hurt in them. Whether any kind of gaming has even thus much to say for itself, I shall not determine; but I think it is very wonderful to see persons of the best sense passing away a dozen hours together in shuffling and dividing a pack of cards, with no other conversation but what is made up of a few game phrases, and no other ideas but those of black or red spots ranged together in different figures. Would not a man laugh to hear any one of this species complaining that life is short?

The stage might be made a perpetual source of the most noble and useful entertainments, were it under proper regulations.

But the mind never unbends itself so agreeably as in the conversation of a well-chosen friend. There is indeed no blessing of life that is any way comparable to the enjoyment of a discreet and virtuous friend. It eases and unloads the mind, clears and improves the understanding, engenders thought and knowledge, animates virtue and good resolution, sooths and allays the passions, and finds employment for most of the vacant hours of life.

Next to such an intimacy with a particular person, one would endeavour after a more general conversation with such as are capable of edifying and entertaining those with whom they converse, which are qualities that seldom go asunder.

There are many other useful amusements of life, which one would endeavour to multiply, that one might, on all occasions, have recourse to something rather than suffer the mind to lie idle, or run adrift with any passion that chances to rise in it.

A man that has a taste in music, painting, or architecture, is like one that has another sense, when compared with such as have no relish of those arts. The florist, the planter, the gardener, the husbandman, when they are only as accomplishments to the man of fortune, are great reliefs to a country life, and many ways useful to those who are possessed of them. *Spectator.*

§ 13. *A Knowledge of the Use and Value of Time very important to Youth.*

There is nothing which I more wish that you should know, and which fewer people do know, than the true use and value of time. It is in every body's mouth; but in few people's practice. Every fool who slatterns away his whole time in nothings, utters, however, some trite common-place sentence, of which there are millions, to prove, at once, the value and the fleetness of time. The sun-dials, likewise, all over Europe, have some ingenious inscription to that effect; so that nobody squanders away their time, without hearing and seeing, daily, how necessary it is to employ it well, and how irrecoverable it is if lost. But all these admonitions are useless, where there is not a fund of good sense and reason to suggest them, rather than receive them. By the manner in which you now tell me that you employ your time, I flatter myself that you have that fund: that is the fund which will make you rich indeed. I do not, therefore, mean to give you a critical essay upon the use and abuse of time; I will only give you some hints, with regard to the use of one particular period of that long time which, I hope, you have before you; I mean the next two years. Remember then, that whatever knowledge you do not solidly lay the foundation of before you are eighteen, you will never be master of while you breathe. Knowledge is a comfortable and necessary retreat and shelter for us in an advanced age; and if we do not plant it while young, it will give us no shade when we grow old. I neither require nor expect from you great application to books, after you are once thrown out into the great world. I know it is impossible; and it may even, in some cases, be improper: this, therefore, is your time, and your only time, for unwearied and uninterrupted application. If you should sometimes think it a little laborious, consider, that labour is the unavoidable fatigue of a necessary journey. The more hours a day you travel, the sooner you will be at your journey's end. The sooner you are qualified for your liberty, the sooner you shall have it; and your manumission will entirely depend upon the manner in which you employ the intermediate time. I think I offer you a very good bargain, when I promise you, upon my word, that, if you will do every thing that I would have you do, till you are eighteen, I will do every thing that you would have me do, ever afterwards.

Lord Chesterfield.

§ 14. *The bad Effects of Indolence.*

No other disposition, or turn of mind, so totally unfits a man for all the social offices of life, as Indolence. An idle man is a mere blank in the creation: he seems made for no end, and lives to no purpose. He cannot engage himself in any employment or profession, because he will never have diligence enough to follow it: he can succeed in no undertaking, for he will never pursue it; he must be a bad husband, father, and relation, for he will not take the least pains to preserve his wife, children, and family, from starving; and he must be a worthless friend, for he would not draw his hand from his bosom, though to prevent the destruction of the universe. If he is born poor, he will remain so all his life, which he will probably end in a ditch, or at the gallows: if he embarks in trade, he will be a bankrupt: and if he is a person of fortune, his stewards will acquire immense estates, and he himself perhaps will die in the Fleet.

It should be considered, that nature did not bring us into the world in a state of perfection, but has left us in a capacity of improvement; which should seem to intimate, that we should labour to render ourselves excellent. Very few are such absolute idiots, as not to be able to become at least decent, if not eminent, in their several stations, by unwearied and keen application: nor are there any possessed of such transcendent genius and abilities, as to render all pains and diligence unnecessary. Perseverance will overcome difficulties, which at first appear insuperable; and it is amazing to consider, how great and numerous obstacles may be removed by a continual attention to any particular point. I will not mention here, the trite example of Demosthenes, who got over the greatest natural impediments to oratory, but content myself with a more modern and familiar instance. Being at Sadler's Wells a few nights ago, I could not but admire the surprising feats of activity there exhibited; and at the same time reflected, what incredible pains and labour it must have cost the performers to arrive at the art of writhing their bodies into such various and unnatural contortions. But I was most taken with the ingenious artist, who, after fixing two bells to each foot, the same number to each hand, and with great propriety placing a cap and bells on his head, played several tunes, and went through as regular triple peals and bob-majors, as the boys of Christ-church Hospital; all which he effected by the due jerking of his arms and legs, and nodding his head backward and forward. If this artist had taken equal pains to employ his head in another way, he might perhaps have been as deep a proficient in numbers as Jedediah Buxton, or at least a tolerable modern rhymer, of which he is now no bad emblem: and if our fine ladies would use equal diligence, they might fashion their minds as successfully, as Madam Catharina distorts her body.

There is not in the world a more useless, idle animal, than he who contents himself with being merely a gentleman. He has an estate, therefore he will not endeavour to acquire knowledge: he is not to labour in any vocation, therefore he will do nothing. But the misfortune is, that there is no such thing in nature as a negative virtue, and that absolute idleness is impracticable. He, who does no good, will certainly do mischief; and the mind, if it is not stored with useful knowledge, will necessarily become a magazine of nonsense and trifles. Wherefore a gentleman, though he is not obliged to rise to open his shop, or work at his trade, should always find some ways of employing his time to advantage. If he makes no advances in wisdom, he will become more and more a slave to folly; and he that does nothing, because he has nothing to do, will become vicious and abandoned, or, at best, ridiculous and contemptible.

I do not know a more melancholy object, than a man of an honest heart, and fine natural abilities, whose good qualities are thus destroyed by indolence. Such a person is a constant plague to all his friends and acquaintance, with all the means in his power of adding to their happiness; and suffers himself to take rank among the lowest characters, when he might render himself conspicuous among the highest. Nobody is more universally beloved and more universally avoided, than my friend Careless. He is a humane man, who never did a beneficent action; and a man of unshaken integrity, on whom it is impossible to depend. With the best head, and the best heart, he regulates his conduct in the most absurd manner, and frequently injures his friends; for whoever neglects to do justice to himself, must inevitably wrong those with whom he is connected; and it is by no means a true maxim, that an idle man hurts nobody but himself.

Virtue then is not to be considered in the light of mere innocence, or abstaining from harm; but as the exertion of our faculties in doing good: as Titus, when he had let a day slip undistinguished by some act of virtue, cried out, "I have lost a day." If we regard our time in this light, how many days shall we look back upon, as irretrievably lost! and to how narrow a compass would such a method of calculation frequently reduce the longest life! If we were to number our days, according as we have applied them to virtue, it would occasion strange revolutions in the manner of reckoning the ages of men. We should see some few arrived to a good old age in the prime of their youth, and meet with several young fellows of fourscore.

Agreeable to this way of thinking, I remember to have met with the epitaph of an aged man four years old; dating his existence from the time of his reformation from evil courses. The inscriptions on most tomb-stones commemorate no acts of virtue performed by the persons who lie under them, but only record, that they were born one day, and died another. But I would fain have those people, whose lives have been useless, rendered of some service after their deaths, by affording lessons of instruction and morality to those they leave behind them. Wherefore I could wish, that, in every parish, several acres were marked out for a new and spacious burying-ground: in which every person, whose remains are there deposited, should have a small stone laid over them, reckoning their age, according to the manner in which they have improved or abused the time allotted them in their lives. In such circumstances, the plate on a coffin might be the highest panegyric which the deceased could receive; and a little square stone, inscribed with Ob. Ann. Æta. 80, would be a nobler eulogium, than all the lapidary adulation of modern epitaphs. *Connoisseur.*

§ 15. *The innocent Pleasures of Childhood.*

As it is usual with me to draw a secret unenvied pleasure from a thousand incidents overlooked by other men, I threw myself into a short transport, forgetting my age, and fancying myself a school-boy.

This imagination was strongly favoured by the presence of so many young boys, in whose looks were legible the sprightly passions of that age, which raised in me a sort of sympathy. Warm blood thrilled through every vein; the faded memory of those enjoyments that once gave me pleasure, put on more lively colours, and a thousand gay amusements filled my mind.

It was not without regret, that I was forsaken by this waking dream. The cheapness of puerile delights, the guiltless joy they leave upon the mind, the blooming hopes that lift up the soul in the ascent of life, the pleasure that attends the gradual opening of the imagination, and the dawn of reason, made me think most men found that stage the most agreeable part of their journey.

When men come to riper years, the innocent diversions which exalted the spirits, and produced health of body, indolence of mind, and refreshing slumbers, are too often exchanged for criminal delights, which fill the soul with anguish, and the body with disease. The grateful employment of admiring and raising themselves to an imitation of the polite style, beautiful images, and noble sentiments of ancient authors, is abandoned for law-latin, the lucubrations of our paltry news-mongers, and that swarm of vile pamphlets which corrupt our taste, and infest the public. The ideas of virtue, which the characters of heroes had imprinted on their minds, insensibly wear out, and they come to be influenced by the nearer examples of a degenerate age.

In the morning of life, when the soul first makes her entrance into the world, all things look fresh and gay; their novelty surprises, and every little glitter or gaudy colour transports the stranger. But by degrees the sense grows callous, and we lose that exquisite relish of trifles, by the time our minds should be supposed ripe for rational entertainments. I cannot make this reflection without being touched with a commiseration of that species called beaus, the happiness of those men necessarily terminating with their childhood, who, from a want of knowing other pursuits, continue a fondness for the delights of that age, after the relish of them is decayed.

Providence hath with a bountiful hand prepared a variety of pleasures for the various stages of life. It behoves us not to be wanting to ourselves in forwarding the intention of nature, by the culture of our minds, and a due preparation of each faculty for the enjoyment of those objects it is capable of being affected with.

As our parts open and display by gentle degrees, we rise from the gratifications of sense, to relish those of the mind. In the scale of pleasure, the lowest are sensual delights, which are succeeded by the more enlarged views and gay portraitures of a lively imagination; and these give way to the sublimer pleasures of reason, which discover the causes and designs, the frame, connexion, and symmetry of things, and fill the mind with the contemplation of intellectual beauty, order, and truth.

Hence I regard our public schools and universities, not only as nurseries of men for the service of the church and state, but also as places designed to teach mankind the most refined luxury, to raise the mind to its due perfection, and give it a taste for those entertainments which afford the highest transport, without the grossness or remorse that attend vulgar enjoyments.

In those blessed retreats men enjoy the sweets of solitude, and yet converse with the greatest genii that have appeared in every age; wander through the delightful mazes of every art and science, and as they gradually enlarge their sphere of knowledge, at once rejoice in their present possessions, and are animated by the boundless prospect of future discoveries. There, a generous emulation, a noble thirst of fame, a love of truth and honourable regards, reign in minds as yet untainted from the world. There, the stock of learning transmitted down from the ancients, is preserved, and receives a daily increase; and it is thence propagated by men, who, having finished their studies, go into the world, and spread that general knowledge and good taste throughout the land, which is so distant from the barbarism of its ancient inhabitants, or the fierce genius of its invaders. And as it is evident that our literature is owing to the schools and universities; so it cannot be denied, that these are owing to our religion.

It was chiefly, if not altogether, upon religious considerations that princes, as well as private persons, have erected colleges, and assigned liberal endowments to students and professors. Upon the same account they meet with encouragement and protection from all christian states, as being esteemed a necessary means to have the sacred oracles and primitive traditions of christianity preserved and understood. And it is well known, that, after a long night of ignorance and superstition, the reformation of the church and that of learning began together, and made proportionable advances, the latter having been the effect of the former, which of course engaged men in the study of the learned languages and of antiquity. *Guardian.*

§ 16. *On Cheerfulness.*

I have always preferred cheerfulness to mirth. The latter I consider as an act, the former as a habit of the mind. Mirth is short and transient, cheerfulness fixed and permanent. Those are often raised into the greatest transports of mirth, who are subject to the greatest depressions of melancholy: on the contrary, cheerfulness, though it does not give the mind such an exquisite gladness, prevents us from falling into any depths of sorrow. Mirth is like a flash of lightning, that breaks through a gloom of clouds, and glitters for a moment; cheerfulness keeps up a kind of daylight in the mind, and fills it with a steady and perpetual serenity.

Men of austere principles look upon mirth as too wanton and dissolute for a state of probation, and as filled with a certain triumph and insolence of heart that is inconsistent with a life which is every moment obnoxious to the greatest dangers. Writers of this complexion have observed, that the sacred Person who was the great pattern of perfection, was never seen to laugh.

Cheerfulness of mind is not liable to any of these exceptions; it is of a serious and composed nature; it does not throw the mind into a condition improper for the present state of humanity, and is very conspicuous in the characters of those who are looked upon as the greatest philosophers among the heathens, as well as among those who have been deservedly esteemed as saints and holy men among Christians.

If we consider cheerfulness in three lights, with regard to ourselves, to those we converse with, and to the great Author of our being, it will not a little recommend itself on each of these accounts. The man who is possessed of this excellent frame of mind, is not only easy in his thoughts, but a perfect master of all the powers and faculties of the soul: his imagination is always clear, and his judgment undisturbed; his temper is even and unruffled, whether in action or solitude. He comes with a relish to all those goods which nature has provided for him, tastes all the pleasures of the creation which are poured about him, and does not feel the full weight of those accidental evils which may befal him.

If we consider him in relation to the persons whom he converses with, it naturally produces love and good-will towards him. A cheerful mind is not only disposed to be affable and obliging, but raises the same good humour in those who come within its influence. A man finds himself pleased, he does not know why, with the cheerfulness of his companion: it is like a sudden sunshine, that awakens a secret delight in the mind, without her attending to it. The heart rejoices of its own accord, and naturally flows out into friendship and benevolence towards the person who has so kindly an effect upon it.

When I consider this cheerful state of mind in its third relation, I cannot but look upon it as a constant habitual gratitude to the great Author of nature. An inward cheerfulness is an implicit praise and thanksgiving to Providence under all its dispensations. It is a kind of acquiescence in the state wherein we are placed, and a secret approbation of the divine will in his conduct towards man.

There are but two things, which, in my opinion, can reasonably deprive us of this cheerfulness of heart.

The first of these is the sense of guilt. A man who lives in a state of vice and impenitence, can have no title to that evenness and tranquillity of mind which is the health of the soul, and the natural effect of virtue and innocence. Cheerfulness in an ill man deserves a harder name than language can furnish us with, and is many degrees beyond what we commonly call folly or madness.

Atheism, by which I mean a disbelief of a Supreme Being, and consequently of a future state, under whatsoever title it shelters itself, may likewise very reasonably deprive a man of this cheerfulness of temper. There is something so particularly gloomy and offensive to human nature in the prospect of non-existence, that I cannot but wonder, with many excellent writers, how it is possible for a man to outlive the expectation of it. For my own part, I think the being of a God is so little to be doubted, that it is almost the only truth we are sure of, and such a truth as we meet with in every object, in every occurrence, and in every thought. If we look into the characters of this tribe of infidels, we generally find they are made up of pride, spleen, and cavil: it is indeed no wonder, that men, who are uneasy to themselves, should be so to the rest of the world; and how is it possible for a man to be otherwise than uneasy in himself, who is in danger every moment of losing his entire existence, and dropping into nothing?

The vicious man and atheist have therefore no pretence to cheerfulness, and would act very unreasonably, should they endeavour after it. It is impossible for any one to live in good humour, and enjoy his present existence, who is apprehensive either of torment or of annihilation; of being miserable, or of not being at all.

After having mentioned these two great principles, which are destructive of cheerfulness in their own nature, as well as in right reason, I cannot think of any other that ought to banish this happy temper from a virtuous mind. Pain and sickness, shame and reproach, poverty and old age, nay death itself, considering the shortness of their duration, and the advantage we may reap from them, do not deserve the name of evils. A good mind may bear up under them with fortitude, with indolence, and with cheerfulness of heart. The tossing of a tempest does not discompose him, which he is sure will bring him to a joyful harbour.

A man, who uses his best endeavours to live according to the dictates of virtue and right reason, has two perpetual sources of cheerfulness, in the consideration of his own nature, and of that Being on whom he has a dependence. If he looks into himself, he cannot but rejoice in that existence, which is so lately bestowed upon him, and which, after millions of ages, will be still new, and still in its beginning. How many self-congratulations naturally arise in the mind, when it reflects on this its entrance into eternity, when it takes a view of those improveable faculties, which in a few years, and even at its first setting out, have made so considerable a progress, and which will be still receiving an increase of perfection, and consequently an increase of happiness! The consciousness of such a being spreads a perpetual diffusion of joy through the soul of a virtuous man, and makes him look upon himself every moment as more happy than he knows how to conceive.

The second source of cheerfulness to a good mind is, its consideration of that Being on whom we have our dependence, and in whom, though we behold him as yet but in the first faint discoveries of his perfections, we see every thing that we can imagine as great, glorious, or amiable. We find ourselves every where upheld by his goodness, and surrounded with an immensity of love and mercy. In short, we depend upon a Being, whose power qualifies him to make us happy by an infinity of means, whose goodness and truth engage him to make those happy who desire it of him, and whose unchangeableness will secure us in this happiness to all eternity.

Such considerations, which every one should perpetually cherish in his thoughts, will banish from us all that secret heaviness of heart which unthinking men are subject to when they lie under no real affliction, all that anguish which we may feel from any evil that actually oppresses us, to which I may likewise add those little cracklings of mirth and folly, that are apter to betray virtue than support it; and establish in us such an even and cheerful temper, as makes us pleasing to ourselves, to those with whom we converse, and to him whom we are made to please.

Spectator.

§ 17. *On the Advantages of a cheerful Temper.*

Cheerfulness is, in the first place, the best promoter of health. Repinings and secret murmurs of heart give imperceptible strokes to those delicate fibres of which the vital parts are composed, and wear out the machine insensibly; not to mention those violent ferments which they stir up in the blood, and those irregular disturbed motions, which they raise in the animal spirits. I scarce remember, in my own observation, to have met with many old men, or with such, who (to use our English phrase) wear well, that had not at least a certain indolence in their humour, if not a more than ordinary gaiety and cheerfulness of heart. The truth of it is, health and cheerfulness mutually beget each other; with this difference, that we seldom meet with a great degree of health which is not attended with a certain cheerfulness, but very often see cheerfulness where there is no great degree of health.

Cheerfulness bears the same friendly regard to the mind as to the body: it banishes all anxious care and discontent, sooths and composes the passions, and keeps the soul in a perpetual calm. But having already touched on this last consideration, I shall here take notice, that the world in which we are placed is filled with innumerable objects that are proper to raise and keep alive this happy temper of mind.

If we consider the world in its subserviency to man, one would think it was made for our use; but if we consider it in its natural beauty and harmony, one would be apt to conclude it was made for our pleasure. The sun, which is as the great soul of the universe, and produces all the necessaries of life, has a particular influence in cheering the mind of man, and making the heart glad.

Those several living creatures which are made for our service or sustenance, at the same time either fill the woods with their music, furnish us with game, or raise pleasing ideas in us by the delightfulness of their appearance. Fountains, lakes, and rivers, are as refreshing to the imagination, as to the soil through which they pass.

There are writers of great distinction, who have made it an argument for Providence, that the whole earth is covered with green, rather than with any other colour, as being such a right mixture of light and shade, that it comforts and strengthens the eye instead of weakening or grieving it. For this reason, several painters have green cloth hanging near them, to ease the eye upon, after too great an application to their colouring. A famous modern philosopher accounts for it in the following manner: All colours that are more luminous, overpower and dissipate the animal spirits which are employed in sight; on the contrary, those that are more obscure do not give the animal spirits a sufficient exercise; whereas, the rays that produce in us the idea of green, fall upon the eye in such a due proportion, that they give the animal spirits their proper play, and, by keeping up the struggle in a just balance, excite a very pleasing and agreeable sensation. Let the cause be what it will, the effect is certain; for which reason, the poets ascribe to this particular colour the epithet of *cheerful.*

To consider further this double end in the works of nature, and how they are, at the same time, both useful and entertaining, we find that the most important parts in the vegetable world are those which are the most beautiful. These are the seeds by which the several races of plants are propagated and continued, and which are always lodged in flowers or blossoms. Nature seems to hide her principal design, and to be industrious in making the earth gay and delightful, while she is carrying on her great work, and intent upon her own preservation. The husbandman, after the same manner, is employed in laying out the whole country into a kind of garden or landscape, and making every thing smile about him, whilst, in reality, he thinks of nothing but of the harvest, and increase which is to arise from it.

We may further observe how Providence has taken care to keep up this cheerfulness in the mind of man, by having formed it after such a manner, as to make it capable of conceiving delight from several objects which seem to have very little use in them; as from the wildness of rocks and deserts, and the like grotesque parts of nature. Those who are versed in philosophy may still carry this consideration higher, by observing, that if matter had appeared to us endowed only with those real qualities which it actually possesses, it would have made but a very joyless and uncomfortable figure; and why has Providence given it a power of producing in us such imaginary qualities, as tastes and colours, sounds and smells, heat and cold, but that man, while he is conversant in the lower stations of nature, might have his mind cheered and delighted with agreeable sensations? In short, the whole universe is a kind of theatre filled with objects that either raise in us pleasure, amusement, or admiration.

The reader's own thoughts will suggest to him the vicissitude of day and night, the change of seasons, with all that variety of scenes which diversify the face of nature, and fill the mind with a perpetual succession of beautiful and pleasing images.

I shall not here mention the several entertainments of art, with the pleasures of friendship, books, conversation, and other accidental diversions of life, because I would only take notice of such incitements to a cheerful temper, as offer themselves to persons of all ranks and conditions, and which may sufficiently show us that Providence did not design this world should be filled with murmurs and repinings, or that the heart of man should be involved in gloom and melancholy.

I the more inculcate this cheerfulness of temper, as it is a virtue in which our countrymen are observed to be more deficient than any other nation. Melancholy is a kind of demon that haunts our island, and often conveys herself to us in an easterly wind. A celebrated French novelist, in opposition to those who begin their romances with a flowery season of the year, enters on his story thus: "In the gloomy month of November, when the people of

England hang and drown themselves, a disconsolate lover walked out into the fields," &c.

Every one ought to fence against the temper of his climate or constitution, and frequently to indulge in himself those considerations which may give him a serenity of mind, and enable him to bear up cheerfully against those little evils and misfortunes which are common to human nature, and which, by a right improvement of them, will produce a satiety of joy, and an uninterrupted happiness.

At the same time that I would engage my reader to consider the world in its most agreeable lights, I must own there are many evils which naturally spring up amidst the entertainments that are provided for us; but these, if rightly considered, should be far from overcasting the mind with sorrow, or destroying that cheerfulness of temper which I have been recommending. This interspersion of evil with good, and pain with pleasure, in the works of nature, is very truly ascribed by Mr. Locke, in his Essay upon Human Understanding, to a moral reason, in the following words:

" Beyond all this, we may find another reason why God hath scattered up and down several degrees of pleasure and pain, in all the things that environ and affect us, and blended them together, in almost all that our thoughts and senses have to do with; that we, finding imperfection, dissatisfaction, and want of complete happiness, in all the enjoyments which the creatures can afford us, might be led to seek it in the enjoyment of him, with whom there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore."

Spectator.

§ 18. *On Truth and Sincerity.*

Truth and reality have all the advantages of appearance, and many more. If the show of any thing be good for any thing, I am sure sincerity is better: for why does any man dissemble, or seem to be that which he is not, but because he thinks it good to have such a quality as he pretends to? for to counterfeit and dissemble, is to put on the appearance of some real excellency. Now the best way in the world for a man to seem to be any thing, is really to be what he would seem to be. Besides, that it is many times as troublesome to make good the pretence of a good quality, as to have it; and if a man have it not, it is ten to one but he is discovered to want it, and then all his pains and labour to seem to have it is lost. There is something unnatural in painting, which a skilful eye will easily discern from native beauty and complexion.

It is hard to personate and act a part long; for where truth is not at the bottom, nature will always be endeavouring to return, and will peep out and betray herself one time or other. Therefore, if any man think it convenient to seem good, let him be so indeed, and then his goodness will appear to every body's satisfaction; so that, upon all accounts, sincerity is true wisdom. Particularly as to the affairs of this world, integrity hath many advantages over all the fine and artificial ways of dissimulation and deceit; it is much the plainer and easier, much the safer and more secure way of dealing in the world; it has less of trouble and difficulty, of entanglement and perplexity, of danger and hazard in it; it is the shortest and nearest way to our end, carrying us thither in a straight line, and will hold out and last longest. The arts of deceit and cunning do continually grow weaker, and less effectual and serviceable to them that use them; whereas integrity gains strength by use; and the more and longer any man practiseth it, the greater service it does him, by confirming his reputation, and encouraging those with whom he hath to do to repose the greatest trust and confidence in him, which is an unspeakable advantage in the business and affairs of life.

Truth is always consistent with itself, and needs nothing to help it out; it is always near at hand, and sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out before we are aware: whereas a lie is troublesome, and sets a man's invention upon the rack, and one trick needs a great many more to make it good. It is like building upon a false foundation, which continually stands in need of props to shore it up, and proves at last more chargeable than to have raised a substantial building at first upon a true and solid foundation; for sincerity is firm and substantial, and there is nothing hollow or unsound in it, and because it is plain and open, fears no discovery; of which the crafty man is always in danger, and when he thinks he walks in the dark, all his pretences are so transparent, that he that runs may read them; he is the last man that finds himself to be found out, and whilst he takes it for granted that he makes fools of others, he renders himself ridiculous.

Add to all this, that sincerity is the most compendious wisdom, and an excellent instrument for the speedy despatch of business; it creates confidence in those we have to deal with, saves the labour of many inquiries, and brings things to an issue in few words; it is like travelling in a plain beaten road, which commonly brings a man sooner to his journey's end than by-ways, in which men often lose themselves. In a word, whatsoever convenience may be thought to be in falsehood and dissimulation, it is soon over; but the inconvenience of it is perpetual, because it brings a man under an everlasting jealousy and suspicion, so that he is not believed when he speaks truth, nor trusted perhaps when he means honestly. When a man has once forfeited the reputation of his integrity, he is set fast, and nothing will then serve his turn, neither truth nor falsehood.

And I have often thought that God hath, in his great wisdom, hid from men of false and dishonest minds, the wonderful advantages of truth and integrity to the prosperity even of our worldly affairs; these men are so blinded by their covetousness and ambition, that they cannot look beyond a present advantage, nor forbear to seize upon it, though by ways never so indirect; they cannot see so far as to the remote consequences of a steady integrity, and the vast benefit and advantages which it will bring a man at last. Were but this sort of men wise and clear-sighted enough to discern this, they would be honest out of very knavery, not out of any love to honesty and virtue, but with a crafty design to promote and advance more effectually their own interests; and therefore the justice of the divine providence hath hid this truest point of wisdom from their eyes, that bad men might not be upon equal terms with the just and upright, and serve their own wicked designs by honest and lawful means.

Indeed, if a man were only to deal in the world for a day, and should never have occasion to converse more with mankind, never more need their good opinion or good word, it were then no great matter (speaking as to the concernments of this world) if a man spent his reputation all at once, and ventured it at one throw: but if he be to continue in the world, and would have the advantage of conversation whilst he is in it, let him make use of truth and sincerity in all his words and actions; for nothing but this will last and hold out to the end: all other arts will fail, but truth and integrity will carry a man through, and bear him out to the last. *Spectator.*

§ 19. *Rules for the Knowledge of One's Self.*

Hypocrisy, at the fashionable end of the town, is very different from that in the city. The modish hypocrite endeavours to appear more vicious than he really is; the other kind of hypocrite more virtuous. The former is afraid of every thing that has the show of religion in it, and would be thought engaged in many criminal gallantries and amours, which he is not guilty of; the latter assumes a face of sanctity, and covers a multitude of vices under a seeming religious deportment.

But there is another kind of hypocrisy, which differs from both of these, and which I intend to make the subject of this paper: I mean that hypocrisy, by which a man does not only deceive the world, but very often imposes on himself; that hypocrisy which conceals his own heart from him, and makes him believe he is more virtuous than he really is, and either not attend to his vices, or mistake even his vices for virtues. It is this fatal hypocrisy and self-deceit, which is taken notice of in these words, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from my secret faults."

If the open professors of impiety deserve the utmost application and endeavours of moral writers, to recover them from vice and folly, how much more may those lay a claim to their care and compassion, who are walking in the paths of death, while they fancy themselves engaged in a course of virtue! I shall therefore endeavour to lay down some rules for the discovery of those vices that lurk in the secret corners of the soul; and to show my reader those methods, by which he may arrive at a true and impartial knowledge of himself. The usual means prescribed for this purpose, are to examine ourselves by the rules which are laid down for our direction in sacred writ, and to compare our lives with the life of that person who acted up to the perfection of human nature, and is the standing example, as well as the great guide and instructor, of those who receive his doctrines. Though these two heads cannot be too much insisted upon, I shall but just mention them, since they have been handled by many great and eminent writers.

I would therefore propose the following methods to the consideration of such as would find out their secret faults, and make a true estimate of themselves.

In the first place, let them consider well, what are the characters which they bear among their enemies. Our friends very often flatter us as much as our own hearts. They either do not see our faults, or conceal them from us, or soften them by their representations, after such a manner, that we think them too trivial to be taken notice of. An adversary, on the contrary, makes a stricter search into us, discovers every flaw and imperfection in our tempers; and, though his malice may set them in too strong a light, it has generally some ground for what it advances. A friend exaggerates a man's virtues, an enemy inflames his crimes. A wise man should give a just attention to both of them, so far as they may tend to the improvement of the one, and the diminution of the other. Plutarch has written an essay on the benefits which a man may receive from his enemies; and among the good fruits of enmity, mentions this in particular, "that, by the reproaches which it casts upon us, we see the worst side of ourselves, and open our eyes to several blemishes and defects in our lives and conversations, which we should not have observed without the help of such ill-natured monitors."

In order likewise to come to a true knowledge of ourselves, we should consider, on the other hand, how far we may deserve the praises and approbations which the world bestows upon us; whether the actions they celebrate proceed from laudable and worthy motives; and how far we are really possessed of the virtues, which gain us applause among those with whom we converse. Such a reflection is absolutely necessary, if we consider how apt we are either to value or condemn ourselves by the opinion of others, and to sacrifice the report of our own hearts to the judgment of the world.

In the next place, that we may not deceive ourselves in a point of so much importance, we should not lay too great a stress on any supposed virtues we possess, that are of a doubtful nature: and such we may esteem all those in which multitudes of men dissent from us, who are as good and as wise as ourselves. We should always act with great cautiousness and circumspection, in points where it is not impossible that we may be deceived. Intemperate zeal, bigotry, and persecution, for any party or opinion, how praise-worthy soever they may appear to weak men of our own principles, produce infinite calamities among mankind, and are highly criminal in their own nature; and yet how many persons, eminent for piety, suffer such monstrous and absurd principles of action to take root in their minds under the colour of virtues? For my own part, I must own, I never yet knew any party so just and reasonable, that a man could follow it in its height and violence, and at the same time be innocent.

We should likewise be very apprehensive of those actions, which proceed from natural constitution, favourite passions, particular education, or whatever promotes our worldly interest or advantage. In these or the like cases, a man's judgment is easily perverted, and a wrong bias hung upon his mind. These are the inlets of prejudice, the unguarded avenues of the mind, by which a thousand errors and secret faults find admission, without being observed or taken notice of. A wise man will suspect those actions to which he is directed by something besides reason, and always apprehends some concealed evil in every resolution that is of a disputable nature, when it is conformable to his particular temper, his age, or way of life, or when it favours his pleasure or his profit.

There is nothing of greater importance to us, than thus diligently to sift our thoughts, and examine all these dark recesses of the mind, if we would establish our souls in such a solid and substantial virtue as will turn to account in that great day, when it must stand the test of infinite wisdom and justice.

I shall conclude this essay with observing, that the two kinds of hypocrisy I have here spoken of, namely, that of deceiving the world, and that of imposing on ourselves, are touched with wonderful beauty in the hundred and thirty-ninth psalm. The folly of the first kind of hypocrisy is there set forth by reflections on God's omniscience and omnipresence, which are celebrated in as noble strains of poetry as any other I ever met with, either sacred or profane. The other kind of hypocrisy, whereby a man deceives himself, is intimated in the two last verses, where the psalmist addresses himself to the great searcher of hearts in that emphatical petition; "Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me and examine my thoughts: look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." *Spectator.*

§ 20. *No Life pleasing to God, but that which is useful to Mankind. An Eastern Story.*

It pleased our mighty sovereign Abbas Carascan, from whom the kings of the earth derive honour and dominion, to set Mirza his servant over the province of Tauris. In the hand of Mirza, the balance of distribution was suspended with impartiality; and under his administration the weak were protected, the learned received honour, and the diligent became rich: Mirza, therefore, was beheld by every eye with complacency, and every tongue pronounced blessings upon his head. But it was observed that he derived no joy from the benefits which he diffused; he became pensive and melancholy; he spent his leisure in solitude; in his palace he sat motionless upon a sofa; and when he went out, his walk was slow, and his eyes were fixed upon the ground: he applied to the business of state with reluctance; and resolved to relinquish the toil of government, of which he could no longer enjoy the reward.

He, therefore, obtained permission to approach the throne of our sovereign; and being asked what was his request, he made this reply: "May the Lord of the world forgive the slave whom he has honoured, if Mirza presume again to lay the bounty of Abbas at his feet. Thou hast given me the dominion of a country, fruitful as the gardens of Damascus; and a city glorious above all others, except that only which reflects the splendour of thy presence. But the longest life is a period scarce sufficient to prepare for death: all other business is vain and trivial, as the toil of emmets in the path of the traveller, under whose foot they perish for ever; and all enjoyment is unsubstantial and evanescent, as the colours of the bow that appears in the interval of a storm. Suffer me, therefore, to prepare for the approach of eternity; let me give up my soul to meditation; let solitude and silence acquaint me with the mysteries of devotion; let me forget the world, and by the world be forgotten, till the moment arrives in which the veil of eternity shall fall, and I shall be found at the bar of the Almighty." Mirza then bowed himself to the earth, and stood silent.

By the command of Abbas it is recorded, that at these words he trembled upon the throne, at the footstool of which the world pays homage; he looked round upon his nobles; but every countenance was pale, and every eye was upon the earth. No man opened his mouth; and the king first broke silence, after it had continued near an hour.

"Mirza, terror and doubt are come upon me. I am alarmed as a man who suddenly perceives that he is near the brink of a precipice, and is urged forward by an irresistible force: but yet I know not whether my danger is a reality or a dream. I am as thou art, a reptile of the earth: my life is a moment, and eternity, in which days, and years, and ages, are nothing, eternity is before me, for which I also should prepare: but by whom then must the Faithful be governed? by those only, who have no fear of judgment? by those only, whose life is brutal, because like brutes they do not consider that they shall die? Or who, indeed, are the Faithful? Are the busy multitudes that crowd the city, in a state of perdition? and is the cell of the Dervise alone the gate of Paradise? To all, the life of a Dervise is not possible: to all, therefore, it cannot be a duty. Depart to the house which has in this city been prepared for thy residence: I will meditate the reason of thy request; and may He who illuminates the mind of the humble, enable me to determine with wisdom."

Mirza departed; and on the third day, having received no command, he again requested an audience, and it was granted. When he entered the royal presence, his countenance appeared more cheerful; he drew a letter from his bosom, and having kissed it, he presented it with his right hand. "My Lord!" said he, "I have learned by this letter, which I received from Cosrou the Iman, who stands now before thee, in what manner life may be best improved. I am enabled to look back with pleasure, and forward with hope; and I shall now rejoice still to be the shadow of thy power at Tauris, and to keep those honours which I so lately wished to resign." The king, who had listened to Mirza with a mixture of surprise and curiosity, immediately gave the letter to Cosrou, and commanded that it should be read. The eyes of the court were at once turned upon the hoary sage, whose countenance was suffused with an honest blush; and it was not without some hesitation that he read these words.

"To Mirza, whom the wisdom of Abbas our mighty Lord has honoured with dominion, be everlasting health! When I heard thy purpose to withdraw the blessings of thy government from the thousands of Tauris, my heart was wounded with the arrow of affliction, and my eyes became dim with sorrow. But who shall speak before the king when he is troubled; and who shall boast of knowledge, when he is distressed by doubt? To thee will I relate the events of my youth, which thou hast renewed before me; and those truths which they have taught me, may the Prophet multiply to thee!

"Under the instruction of the physician Aluzar, I obtained an early knowledge of his art. To those who were smitten with disease, I could administer plants, which the sun has impregnated with the spirit of health. But the scenes of pain, languor, and mortality, which were perpetually rising before me, made me often tremble for myself. I saw the grave open at my feet: I determined, therefore, to contemplate only the regions beyond it, and to despise every acquisition which I could not keep. I conceived an opinion, that as there was no merit but in voluntary poverty and silent meditation, those who desired money were not proper objects of bounty; and that by all who were proper objects of bounty money was despised. I, therefore, buried mine in the earth; and renouncing society, I wandered into a wild and sequestered part of the country: my dwelling was a cave by the side of a hill; I drank the running water from the spring, and ate such fruits and herbs as I could find. To increase the austerity of my life, I frequently watched all night, sitting at the entrance of the cave with my face to the east, resigning myself to the secret influences of the Prophet, and expecting illuminations from above. One morning after my nocturnal vigil, just as I perceived the horizon glow at the approach of the sun, the power of sleep became irresistible, and I sunk under it. I imagined myself still sitting at the entrance of my cell; that the dawn increased; and that as I looked earnestly for the first beam of day, a dark spot appeared to intercept it. I perceived that it was in motion; it increased in size as it drew near, and at length I discovered it to be an eagle. I still kept my eye fixed steadfastly upon it, and saw it alight at a small distance, where I now descried a fox whose two fore-legs appeared to be broken. Before this fox the eagle laid part of a kid, which she had brought in her talons, and then disappeared. When I awaked, I laid my forehead upon the ground, and blessed the Prophet for the instruction of the morning. I reviewed my dream, and said thus to myself: Cosrou, thou hast done well to renounce the tumult, the business, and vanities of life: but thou hast as yet only done it in part; thou art still every day busied in the search of food, thy mind is not wholly at rest, neither is thy trust in Providence complete. What art thou taught by this vision? If thou hast seen an eagle commissioned by Heaven to feed a fox that is lame, shall not the hand of Heaven also supply thee with food; when that which prevents thee from procuring it for thyself, is not necessity but devotion? I was now so confident of a miraculous supply, that I neglected to walk out for my repast, which, after the first day, I expected with an impatience that left me little power of attending to any other object: this impatience, however, I laboured to suppress, and persisted in my resolution; but my eyes at length began to fail me, and my knees smote each other; I threw myself backward, and hoped my weakness would soon increase to insensibility. But I was suddenly roused by the voice of an invisible being, who pronounced these words: 'Cosrou, I am the angel, who by the command of the Almighty, have registered the thoughts of thy heart, which I am now commissioned to reprove. While thou wast attempting to become wise above that which is revealed, thy folly has perverted the instruction which was vouchsafed thee. Art thou disabled as the Fox? hast thou not rather the powers of the Eagle? Arise, let the Eagle be the object of thy emulation. To pain and sickness, be thou again the messenger of ease and health. Virtue is not rest, but action. If thou dost good to man as an evidence of thy love to God, thy virtue will be exalted from moral to divine; and that happiness which is the pledge of Paradise, will be thy reward upon earth.'

"At these words I was not less astonished than if a mountain had been overturned at my feet. I humbled myself in the dust; I returned to the city; I dug up my treasure; I was liberal, yet I became rich. My skill in restoring health to the body gave me frequent opportunities of curing the diseases of the soul. I put on the sacred vestments; I grew eminent beyond my merit; and it was the pleasure of the king that I should stand before him. Now, therefore, be not offended; I boast of no knowledge that I have not received: as the sands of the desert drink up the drops of rain, or the dew of the morning, so do I also, who am but dust, imbibe the instructions of the Prophet. Believe then that it is he who tells thee, all knowledge is profane, which terminates in thyself; and by a life wasted in speculation, little even of this can be gained. When the gates of Paradise are thrown open before thee, thy mind shall be irradiated in a moment; here thou canst little more than pile error upon error; there thou shalt build truth upon truth. Wait, therefore, for the glorious vision; and in the mean time emulate the Eagle. Much is in thy power; and, therefore, much is expected of thee. Though the Almighty only can give virtue, yet, as a prince, thou mayest stimulate those to beneficence, who act from no higher motive than immediate interest: thou canst not produce the principle, but mayest enforce the practice. The relief of the poor is equal, whether they receive it from ostentation, or charity; and the effect of example is the same, whether it be intended to obtain the favour of God or man. Let thy virtue be thus diffused; and if thou believest with reverence, thou shalt be accepted above. Farewell. May the smile of Him who resides in the Heaven of Heavens be upon thee! and against thy name, in the volume of His will, may happiness be written!"

The King, whose doubts like those of Mirza, were now removed, looked up with a smile that communicated the joy of his mind. He dismissed the prince to his government; and commanded these events to be recorded, to the end that posterity may know "that no life is pleasing to God, but that which is useful to mankind." *Adventurer.*

§ 21. *Providence proved from Animal Instinct.*

I must confess I am infinitely delighted with those speculations of nature which are to be made in a country life; and as my reading has very much lain among books of natural history, I cannot forbear recollecting, upon this occasion, the several remarks which I have met with in authors, and comparing them with what falls under my own observation; the arguments for Providence, drawn from the natural history of animals, being, in my opinion, demonstrative.

The make of every kind of animal is different from that of every other kind; and yet there is not the least turn in the muscles or twist in the fibres of any one, which does not render them more proper for that particular animal's way of life, than any other cast or texture of them would have been.

The most violent appetites in all creatures are *lust* and *hunger:* the first is a perpetual call upon them to propagate their kind; the latter to preserve themselves.

It is astonishing to consider the different degrees of care that descend from the parent of the young, so far as is absolutely necessary for the leaving a posterity. Some creatures cast their eggs as chance directs them, and think of them no farther, as insects, and several kinds of fish; others, of a nicer frame, find out proper beds to deposit them in, and there leave them, as the serpent, the crocodile, and ostrich; others hatch their eggs and tend the birth, until it is able to shift for itself.

What can we call the principle which directs every different kind of bird to observe a particular plan in the structure of its nest, and directs all of the same species to work after the same model? It cannot be *imitation;* for though you hatch a crow under a hen, and never let it see any of the works of its own kind, the nest it makes shall be the same, to the laying of a stick, with all the nests of the same species. It cannot be *reason;* for were animals endued with it to as great a degree as man, their buildings would be as different as ours, according to the different conveniences that they would propose to themselves.

Is it not remarkable that the same temper of weather which raises this general warmth in animals, should cover the trees with leaves, and the fields with grass, for their security and concealment, and produce such infinite swarms of insects for the support and sustenance of their respective broods?

Is it not wonderful, that the love of the parent should be so violent while it lasts, and that it should last no longer than is necessary for the preservation of the young?

The violence of this natural love is exemplified by a very barbarous experiment; which I shall quote at length, as I find it in an excellent author, and hope my readers will pardon the mentioning such an instance of cruelty, because there is nothing can so effectually show the strength of that principle in animals of which I am here speaking. "A person, who was well skilled in dissections, opened a bitch, and as she lay in the most exquisite torture, offered her one of her young puppies, which she immediately fell a licking; and for the time seemed insensible of her pain: on the removal, she kept her eye fixed on it, and began a wailing sort of cry, which seemed rather to proceed from the loss of her young one, than the sense of her own torments."

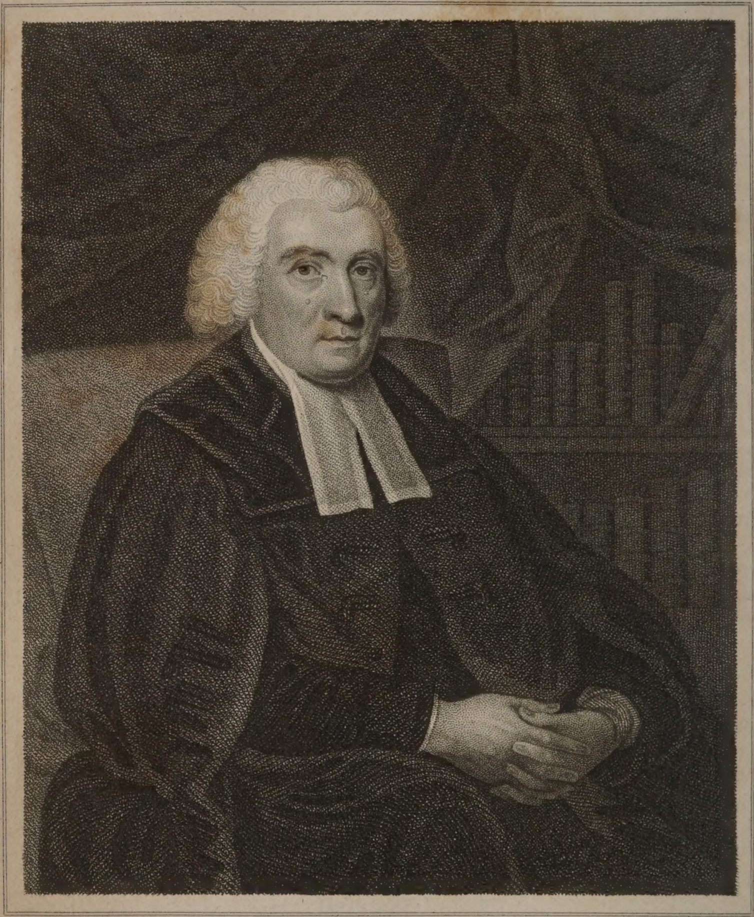
But notwithstanding this natural love in brutes is much more violent and intense than in rational creatures, Providence has taken care that it should be no longer troublesome to the parent than it is useful to the young; for so soon as the wants of the latter cease, the mother withdraws her fondness, and leaves them to provide for themselves: and what is a very remarkable circumstance in this part of instinct, we find that the love of the parent may be lengthened out beyond its usual time, if the preservation of the species requires it; as we may see in birds that drive away their young as soon as they are able to get their livelihood, but continue to feed them if they are tied to the nest, or confined within a cage, or by any other means appear to be out of a condition of supplying their own necessities.

This natural love is not observed in animals to ascend from the young to the parent, which is not at all necessary for the continuance of the species: nor indeed in reasonable creatures does it rise in any proportion, as it spreads itself downwards; for in all family affection, we find protection granted, and favours bestowed, are greater motives to love and tenderness, than safety, benefits, or life received.

One would wonder to hear sceptical men disputing for the reason of animals, and telling us it is only our pride and prejudices that will not allow them the use of that faculty.

Reason shows itself in all occurrences of life; whereas the brute makes no discovery of such a talent, but what immediately regards his own preservation, or the continuance of his species. Animals in their generation are wiser than the sons of men; but their wisdom is confined to a few particulars, and lies in a very narrow compass. Take a brute out of his instinct, and you find him wholly deprived of understanding.—To use an instance that comes often under observation:

With what caution does the hen provide herself a nest in places unfrequented, and free from noise and disturbance! When she has laid her eggs in such a manner that she can cover them, what care does she take in turning them frequently, that all parts may partake of the vital warmth! When she leaves them, to provide for her necessary sustenance, how punctually does she return before they have time to cool, and become incapable of producing an animal! In the summer you see her giving herself greater freedoms, and quitting her care for above two hours together; but in winter, when the rigour of the season would chill the principles of life, and destroy the young one, she grows more assiduous in her attendance, and stays away but half the time. When the birth approaches, with how much nicety and attention does she help the chick to break its prison! Not to take notice of her covering it from the injuries of the weather, providing it proper nourishment, and teaching it to help itself; nor to mention her forsaking the nest, if after the usual time of reckoning, the young one does not make its appearance. A chymical operation could not be followed with greater art or diligence, than is seen in the hatching of a chick; though there are many other birds that show an infinitely greater sagacity in all the forementioned particulars.



Raeburn pinx. *T. Kelly Sculp.*

HUGH BLAIR, D.D.

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But at the same time the hen, that has all this seeming ingenuity (which is indeed absolutely necessary for the propagation of the species,) considered in other respects, is without the least glimmerings of thought or common sense. She mistakes a piece of chalk for an egg, and sits upon it in the same manner: she is insensible of any increase or diminution in the number of those she lays: she does not distinguish between her own and those of another species; and when the birth appears of never so different a bird, will cherish it for her own. In all these circumstances, which do not carry an immediate regard to the subsistence of herself or her species, she is a very idiot.

There is not, in my opinion, any thing more mysterious in nature, than this instinct in animals, which thus rises above reason, and falls infinitely short of it. It cannot be accounted for by any properties in matter, and at the same time works after so odd a manner, that one cannot think it the faculty of an intellectual being. For my own part, I look upon it as upon the principle of gravitation in bodies, which is not to be explained by any known qualities inherent in the bodies themselves, nor from any laws of mechanism, but, according to the best notions of the greatest philosophers, is an immediate impression from the first Mover, and the divine energy acting in the creatures. *Spectator.*

§ 22. *The Necessity of forming religious Principles at an early Age.*

As soon as you are capable of reflection, you must perceive that there is a right and a wrong in human actions. You see that those who are born with the same advantages of fortune, are not all equally prosperous in the course of life. While some of them, by wise and steady conduct, attain distinction in the world, and pass their days with comfort and honour; others of the same rank, by mean and vicious behaviour, forfeit the advantages of their birth, involve themselves in much misery, and end in being a disgrace to their friends, and a burden on society. Early, then, you may learn that it is not on the external condition in which you find yourselves placed, but on the part which you are to act, that your welfare or unhappiness, your honour or infamy, depend. Now, when beginning to act that part, what can be of greater moment, than to regulate your plan of conduct with the most serious attention, before you have yet committed any fatal or irretrievable errors? If, instead of exerting reflection for this valuable purpose, you deliver yourselves up, at so critical a time, to sloth and pleasure; if you refuse to listen to any counsellor but humour, or to attend to any pursuit except that of amusement; if you allow yourselves to float loose and careless on the tide of life, ready to receive any direction which the current of fashion may chance to give you; what can you expect to follow from such beginnings? While so many around you are undergoing the sad consequences of a like indiscretion, for what reason shall not these consequences extend to you? Shall you only attain success without that preparation, and escape dangers without that precaution, which is required of others? Shall happiness grow up to you of its own accord, and solicit your acceptance, when, to the rest of mankind, it is the fruit of long cultivation, and the acquisition of labour and care?—Deceive not yourselves with such arrogant hopes. Whatever be your rank, Providence will not, for your sake, reverse its established order. By listening to wise admonitions, and tempering the vivacity of youth with a proper mixture of serious thought, you may ensure cheerfulness for the rest of your life; but by delivering yourselves up at present to giddiness and levity, you lay the foundation of lasting heaviness of heart.

Blair.

§ 23. *The Acquisition of virtuous Dispositions and Habits a necessary Part of Education.*

When you look forward to those plans of life, which either your circumstances have suggested, or your friends have proposed, you will not hesitate to acknowledge, that in order to pursue them with advantage, some previous discipline is requisite. Be assured, that whatever is to be your profession, no education is more necessary to your success, than the acquirement of virtuous dispositions and habits. This is the universal preparation for every character, and every station in life. Bad as the world is, respect is always paid to virtue. In the usual course of human affairs it will be found, that a plain understanding, joined with acknowledged worth, contributes more to prosperity, than the brightest parts without probity or honour. Whether science, or business, or public life, be your aim, virtue still enters, for a principal share, into all those great departments of society. It is connected with eminence, in every liberal art; with reputation, in every branch of fair and useful business; with distinction, in every public station. The vigour which it gives the mind, and the weight which it adds to character; the generous sentiments which it breathes; the undaunted spirit which it inspires, the ardour of diligence which it quickens, the freedom which it procures from pernicious and dishonourable avocations, are the foundations of all that is high in fame or great in success among men. Whatever ornamental or engaging endowments you now possess, virtue is a necessary requisite, in order to their shining with proper lustre. Feeble are the attractions of the fairest form, if it be suspected that nothing within corresponds to the pleasing appearance without. Short are the triumphs of wit, when it is supposed to be the vehicle of malice. By whatever arts you may at first attract the attention, you can hold the esteem and secure the hearts of others only by amiable dispositions and the accomplishments of the mind. These are the qualities whose influence will last, when the lustre of all that once sparkled and dazzled has passed away. *Ibid.*

§ 24. *The Happiness and Dignity of Manhood depend upon the Conduct of the youthful Age.*

Let not the season of youth be barren of improvements, so essential to your felicity and honour. Your character is now of your own forming; your fate is in some measure put into your own hands. Your nature is as yet pliant and soft. Habits have not established their dominion. Prejudices have not pre-occupied your understanding. The world has not had time to contract and debase your affections. All your powers are more vigorous, disembarrassed and free, than they will be at any future period. Whatever impulse you now give to your desires and passions, the direction is likely to continue. It will form the channel in which your life is to run; nay, it may determine an everlasting issue. Consider then the employment of this important period as the highest trust which shall ever be committed to you; as, in a great measure, decisive of your happiness, in time and in eternity. As in the succession of the seasons, each, by the invariable laws of nature, affects the productions of what is next in course; so, in human life, every period of our age, according as it is well or ill spent, influences the happiness of that which is to follow. Virtuous youth gradually brings forward accomplished and flourishing manhood; and such manhood passes of itself, without uneasiness, into respectable and tranquil old age. But when nature is turned out of its regular course, disorder takes place in the moral, just as in the vegetable world. If the spring put forth no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit: so, if youth be trifled away without improvement, manhood will be contemptible, and old age miserable. *Blair.*

§ 25. *Piety to God the Foundation of good Morals.*

What I shall first recommend is piety to God. With this I begin, both as the foundation of good morals, and as a disposition particularly graceful and becoming in youth. To be void of it, argues a cold heart, destitute of some of the best affections which belong to that age. Youth is the season of warm and generous emotions. The heart should then spontaneously rise into the admiration of what is great; glow with the love of what is fair and excellent; and melt at the discovery of tenderness and goodness. Where can any object be found, so proper to kindle those affections, as the Father of the universe, and the Author of all felicity? Unmoved by veneration, can you contemplate that grandeur and majesty which his works every where display? Untouched by gratitude, can you view that profusion of good, which, in this pleasing season of life, his beneficent hand pours around you? Happy in the love and affection of those with whom you are connected, look up to the Supreme Being, as the inspirer of all the friendship which has ever been shown you by others; himself your best and your first friend; formerly, the supporter of your infancy, and the guide of your childhood: now, the guardian of your youth, and the hope of your coming years. View religious homage as a natural expression of gratitude to him for all his goodness. Consider it as the service of the God of your fathers; of him to whom your parents devoted you; of him whom in former ages your ancestors honoured; and by whom they are now rewarded and blessed in heaven. Connected with so many tender sensibilities of soul, let religion be with you, not the cold and barren offspring of speculation, but the warm and vigorous dictate of the heart. *Ibid.*

§ 26. *Religion never to be treated with Levity.*

Impress your minds with reverence for all that is sacred. Let no wantonness of youthful spirits, no compliance with the intemperate mirth of others, ever betray you into profane sallies. Besides the guilt which is thereby incurred, nothing gives a more odious appearance of petulance and presumption to youth, than the affectation of treating religion with levity. Instead of being an evidence of superior understanding, it discovers a pert and shallow mind; which, vain of the first smatterings of knowledge, presumes to make light of what the rest of mankind revere. At the same time, you are not to imagine, that when exhorted to be religious, you are called upon to become more formal and solemn in your manners than others of the same years; or to erect yourselves into supercilious reprovers of those around you. The spirit of true religion breathes gentleness and affability. It gives a native unaffected ease to the behaviour. It is social, kind, and cheerful; far removed from that gloomy and illiberal superstition which clouds the brows, sharpens the temper, dejects the spirit, and teaches men to fit themselves for another world, by neglecting the concerns of this. Let your religion, on the contrary, connect preparation for heaven with an honourable discharge of the duties of active life. Of such religion discover, on every proper occasion, that you are not ashamed; but avoid making any unnecessary ostentation of it before the world.

Blair.

§ 27. *Modesty and Docility to be joined to Piety.*

To piety join modesty and docility, reverence of your parents, and submission to those who are your superiors in knowledge, in station, and in years. Dependence and obedience belong to youth. Modesty is one of its chief ornaments; and has ever been esteemed a presage of rising merit. When entering on the career of life, it is your part, not to assume the reins as yet into your hands; but to commit yourselves to the guidance of the more experienced, and to become wise by the wisdom of those who have gone before you. Of all the follies incident to youth, there are none which either deform its present appearance, or blast the prospect of its future prosperity, more than self-conceit, presumption, and obstinacy. By checking its natural progress in improvement, they fix it in long immaturity; and frequently produce mischiefs which can never be repaired. Yet these are vices too commonly found among the young. Big with enterprise, and elated by hope, they resolve to trust for success to none but themselves. Full of their own abilities, they deride the admonitions which are given them by their friends, as the timorous suggestions of age. Too wise to learn, too impatient to deliberate, too forward to be restrained, they plunge, with precipitant indiscretion, into the midst of all the dangers with which life abounds. *Ibid.*

§ 28. *Sincerity and Truth recommended.*

It is necessary to recommend to you sincerity and truth. This is the basis of every virtue. That darkness of character, where we can see no heart; those foldings of art, through which no native affection is allowed to penetrate, present an object, unamiable in every season of life, but particularly odious in youth. If, at an age when the heart is warm, when the emotions are strong, and when nature is expected to show herself free and open, you can already smile and deceive, what are we to look for, when you shall be longer hackneyed in the ways of men; when interest shall have completed the obduration of your heart, and experience shall have improved you in all the arts of guile? Dissimulation in youth is the forerunner of perfidy in old age. Its first appearance is the fatal omen of growing depravity and future shame. It degrades parts and learning; obscures the lustre of every accomplishment; and sinks you into contempt with God and man. As you value, therefore, the approbation of Heaven, or the esteem of the world, cultivate the love of truth. In all your proceedings, be direct and consistent. Ingenuity and candour possess the most powerful charm; they bespeak universal favour, and carry an apology for almost every failing. The path of truth is a plain and safe path; that of falsehood is a perplexing maze. After the first departure from sincerity, it is not in your power to stop. One artifice unavoidably leads on to another; till, as the intricacy of the labyrinth increases, you are left entangled in your own snare. Deceit discovers a little mind, which stops at temporary expedients, without rising to comprehensive views of conduct. It betrays, at the same time, a dastardly spirit. It is the resource of one who wants courage to avow his designs, or to rest upon himself. Whereas, openness of character displays that generous boldness which ought to distinguish youth. To set out in the world with no other principle than a crafty attention to interest, betokens one who is destined for creeping through the inferior walks of life: but to give an early preference to honour above gain, when they stand in competition; to despise every advantage, which cannot be attained without dishonest arts; to brook no meanness, and to stoop to no dissimulation; are the indications of a great mind, the presages of future eminence and distinction in life. At the same time this virtuous sincerity is perfectly consistent with the most prudent vigilance and caution. It is opposed to cunning, not to true wisdom. It is not the simplicity of a weak and improvident, but the candour of an enlarged and noble mind; of one who scorns deceit, because he accounts it both base and unprofitable; and who seeks no disguise, because he needs none to hide him.

Blair.

§ 29. *Benevolence and Humanity.*

Youth is the proper season of cultivating the benevolent and humane affections. As a great part of your happiness is to depend on the connexions which you form with others, it is of high importance that you acquire betimes the temper and the manners which will render such connexions comfortable. Let a sense of justice be the foundation of all your social qualities. In your most early intercourse with the world, and even in your youthful amusements, let no unfairness be found. Engrave on your mind that sacred rule, of "doing in all things to others, according as you wish that they should do unto you." For this end, impress yourselves with a deep sense of the original and natural equality of men. Whatever advantages of birth or fortune you possess, never display them with an ostentatious superiority. Leave the subordinations of rank to regulate the intercourse of more advanced years. At present it becomes you to act among your companions, as man with man. Remember how unknown to you are the vicissitudes of the world; and how often they, on whom ignorant and contemptuous young men once looked down with scorn, have risen to be their superiors in future years. Compassion is an emotion of which you never ought to be ashamed. Graceful in youth is the tear of sympathy, and the heart that melts at the tale of woe. Let not ease and indulgence contract your affections, and wrap you up in selfish enjoyment. Accustom yourselves to think of the distresses of human life; of the solitary cottage, the dying parent, and the weeping orphan. Never sport with pain and distress, in any of your amusements; nor treat even the meanest insect with wanton cruelty. *Ibid.*

§ 30. *Courtesy and engaging Manners.*

In order to render yourselves amiable in society, correct every appearance of harshness in behaviour. Let that courtesy distinguish your demeanour, which springs not so much from studied politeness, as from a mild and gentle heart. Follow the customs of the world in matters indifferent; but stop when they become sinful. Let your manners be simple and natural; and of course they will be engaging. Affectation is certain deformity. By forming yourselves on fantastic models, and vieing with one another in every reigning folly, the young begin with being ridiculous, and end in being vicious and immoral. *Blair.*

§ 31. *Temperance in Pleasure recommended.*

Let me particularly exhort youth to temperance in pleasure. Let me admonish them to beware of that rock on which thousands, from race to race, continue to split. The love of pleasure, natural to man in every period of his life, glows at this age with excessive ardour. Novelty adds fresh charms, as yet, to every gratification. The world appears to spread a continual feast; and health, vigour, and high spirits, invite them to partake of it without restraint. In vain we warn them of latent dangers. Religion is accused of insufferable severity, in prohibiting enjoyment; and the old, when they offer their admonition, are upbraided with having forgot that they once were young.—And yet, my friends, to what do the constraints of religion, and the counsels of age, with respect to pleasure, amount? They may all be comprised in a few words—not to hurt yourselves, and not to hurt others, by your pursuit of pleasure. Within these bounds, pleasure is lawful; beyond them it becomes criminal, because it is ruinous. Are these restraints any other than what a wise man would choose to impose on himself? We call you not to renounce pleasure, but to enjoy it in safety. Instead of abridging it, we exhort you to pursue it on an extensive plan. We propose measures for securing its possession, and for prolonging its duration.

Ibid.

§ 32. *Whatever violates Nature, cannot afford true Pleasure.*

Consult your whole nature. Consider yourselves not only as sensitive, but as rational beings; not only as rational, but social; not only as social, but immortal. Whatever violates your nature in any of these respects, cannot afford true pleasure; any more than that which undermines an essential part of the vital system, can promote health. For the truth of this conclusion, we appeal not merely to the authority of religion, nor to the testimony of the aged, but to yourselves, and your own experience. We ask, whether you have not found, that in a course of criminal excess, your pleasure was more than compensated by succeeding pain? Whether, if not from every particular instance, yet from every habit, at least, of unlawful gratification, there did not spring some thorn to wound you; there did not arise some consequence to make you repent of it in the issue? How long will you repeat the same round of pernicious folly, and tamely expose yourselves to be caught in the same snare? If you have any consideration, or any firmness left, avoid temptations, for which you have found yourselves unequal, with as much care as you would shun pestilential infection. Break off all connexions with the loose and profligate. *Ibid.*

§ 33. *Industry and Application.*

Diligence, industry, and proper improvement of time, are material duties of the young. To no purpose are they endowed with the best abilities, if they want activity for exerting them. Unavailing, in this case, will be every direction that can be given them, either for their temporal or spiritual welfare. In youth, the habits of industry are most easily acquired; in youth the incentives to it are strongest, from ambition and from duty, from emulation and hope, from all the prospects which the beginning of life affords. If, dead to these calls, you already languish in slothful inaction, what will be able to quicken the more sluggish current of advancing years? Industry is not only the instrument of improvement, but the foundation of pleasure. Nothing is so opposite to the true enjoyment of life, as the relaxed and feeble state of an indolent mind. He who is a stranger to industry, may possess, but he cannot enjoy. For it is labour only which gives the relish to pleasure. It is the appointed vehicle of every good man. It is the indispensable condition of our possessing a sound mind in a sound body. Sloth is so inconsistent with both, that it is hard to determine, whether it be a greater foe to virtue, or to health and happiness. Inactive as it is in itself, its effects are fatally powerful. Though it appear a slowly-flowing stream, yet it undermines all that is stable and flourishing. It not only saps the foundation of every virtue, but pours upon you a deluge of crimes and evils. It is like water which first putrefies by stagnation, and then sends up noxious vapours, and fills the atmosphere with death. Fly, therefore, from idleness, as the certain parent both of guilt and of ruin. And under idleness I include, not mere inaction only, but all that circle of trifling occupations, in which too many saunter away their youth; perpetually engaged in frivolous society, or public amusements; in the labours of dress, or the ostentation of their persons—Is this the foundation which you lay for future usefulness and esteem? By such accomplishments do you hope to recommend yourselves to the thinking part of the world, and to answer the expectations of your friends and your country?—Amusements youth requires: it were vain, it were cruel, to prohibit them. But, though allowable as the relaxation, they are most culpable as the business, of the young. For they then become the gulf of time, and the poison of the mind. They foment bad passions. They weaken the manly powers. They sink the native vigour of youth into contemptible effeminacy. *Blair.*

§ 34. *The Employment of Time.*

Redeeming your time from such dangerous waste, seek to fill it with employments which you may review with satisfaction. The acquisition of knowledge is one of the most honourable occupations of youth. The desire of it discovers a liberal mind, and is connected with many accomplishments and many virtues. But though your train of life should not lead you to study, the course of education always furnishes proper employments to a well disposed mind. Whatever you pursue, be emulous to excel. Generous ambition, and sensibility to praise, are, especially at your age, among the marks of virtue. Think not, that any affluence of fortune, or any elevation of rank, exempts you from the duties of application and industry. Industry is the law of our being; it is the demand of nature, of reason, and of God. Remember always, that the years which now pass over your heads, leave permanent memorials behind them. From your thoughtless minds they may escape; but they remain in the remembrance of God. They form an important part of the register of your life. They will hereafter bear testimony, either for or against you at that day when, for all your actions, but particularly for the employments of youth, you must give an account to God. Whether your future course is destined to be long or short, after this manner it should commence; and, if it continue to be thus conducted, its conclusion, at what time soever it arrives, will not be inglorious or unhappy. *Ibid.*

§ 35. *The Necessity of an early and close Application to Wisdom.*

It is necessary to habituate our

minds, in our younger years, to some employment which may engage our thoughts, and fill the capacity of the soul at a riper age. For, however we may roam in youth from folly to folly, too volatile for rest, too soft and effeminate for industry, ever ambitious to make a splendid figure; yet the time will come when we shall outgrow the relish of childish amusements: and, if we are not provided with a taste for manly satisfactions to succeed in their room, we must of course become miserable, at an age more difficult to be pleased. While men, however unthinking and unemployed, enjoy an inexhaustible flow of vigorous spirits; a constant succession of gay ideas, which flatter and sport in the brain, makes them pleased with themselves, and with every frolic as trifling as themselves; but when the ferment of their blood abates, and the freshness of their youth, like the morning dew, passes away, their spirits flag for want of entertainments more satisfactory in themselves, and more suited to a manly age; and the soul, from a sprightly impertinence, from quick sensations, and florid desires, subsides into a dead calm, and sinks into a flat stupidity. The fire of a glowing imagination (the property of youth) may make folly look pleasing, and lend a beauty to objects, which have none inherent in them; just as the sun beams may paint a cloud, and diversify it with beautiful stains of light, however dark, unsubstantial, and empty in itself. But nothing can shine with undiminished lustre, but religion and knowledge, which are essentially and intrinsically bright. Take it therefore for granted, which you will find by experience, that nothing can be long entertaining, but what is in some measure beneficial; because nothing else will bear a calm and sedate review.

You may be fancied for a while, upon the account of good-nature, the inseparable attendant upon a flush of sanguine health, and a fulness of youthful spirits: but you will find, in process of time, that among the wise and good, useless good-nature is the object of pity, ill-nature of hatred; but nature beautified and improved by an assemblage of moral and intellectual endowments, is the only object of a solid and lasting esteem.

Seed.

§ 36. *The Unhappiness consequent on the Neglect of early improving the Mind.*

There is not a greater inlet to misery and vices of all kinds, than the not knowing how to pass our vacant hours. For what remains to be done, when the first part of their lives, who are not brought up to any manual employment, is slipped away without an acquired relish for reading, or taste for other rational satisfactions? That they should pursue their pleasures?—But, religion apart, common prudence will warn them to tie up the wheel as they begin to go down the hill of life. Shall they then apply themselves to their studies? Alas! the seed-time is already past: the enterprising and spirited ardour of youth being over, without having been applied to those valuable purposes for which it was given, all ambition of excelling upon generous and laudable schemes quite stagnates. If they have not some poor expedient to deceive the time, or, to speak more properly, to deceive themselves, the length of a day will seem tedious to them, who, perhaps, have the unreasonableness to complain of the shortness of life in general. When the former part of our life has been nothing but vanity, the latter end of it can be nothing but vexation. In short, we must be miserable, without some employment to fix, or some amusement to dissipate our thoughts: the latter we cannot command in all places, nor relish at all times; and therefore there is an absolute necessity for the former. We may pursue this or that new pleasure; we may be fond for a while of a new acquisition; but when the graces of novelty are worn off, and the briskness of our first desire is over, the transition is very quick and sudden, from an eager fondness to a cool indifference. Hence there is a restless agitation in our minds, still craving something new, still unsatisfied with it, when possessed; till melancholy increases, as we advance in years, like shadows lengthening towards the close of day.

Hence it is that men of this stamp are continually complaining that the times are altered for the worse: because the sprightliness of their youth represented every thing in the most engaging light; and when men are in high good humour with themselves, they are apt to be so with all around; the face of nature brightens up, and the sun shines with a more agreeable lustre: but when old age has cut them off from the enjoyment of false pleasures, and habitual vice has given them a distaste for the only true and lasting delights; when a retrospect of their past lives presents nothing to view but one wide tract of uncultivated ground; a soul distempered with spleen, remorse, and an insensibility of each rational satisfaction, darkens and discolours every object; and the change is not in the times, but in them, who have been forsaken by those gratifications which they would not forsake.

How much otherwise is it with those who have laid up an inexhaustible fund of knowledge! When a man has been laying out that time in the pursuit of some great and important truth, which others waste in a circle of gay follies, he is conscious of having acted up to the dignity of his nature; and from that consciousness there results that serene complacency, which, though not so violent, is much preferable to the pleasures of the animal life. He can travel on from strength to strength; for, in literature as in war, each new conquest which he gains, empowers him to push his conquests still farther, and to enlarge the empire of reason: thus he is ever in a progressive state, still making new acquirements, still animated with hopes of future discoveries. *Seed.*

§ 37. *Great Talents not requisite for the common Duties of Life.*

Some may allege, in bar to what I have said, as an excuse for their indolence, the want of proper talents to make any progress in learning. To which I answer, that few stations require uncommon abilities to discharge them well; for the ordinary offices of life, that share of apprehension which falls to the bulk of mankind, provided we improve it, will serve well enough. Bright and sparkling parts are like diamonds, which may adorn the proprietor, but are not necessary for the good of the world; whereas common sense is like current coin; we have every day, in the ordinary occurrences of life, occasion for it: and if we would but call it into action, it would carry us much greater lengths than we seem to be aware of. Men may extol, as much as they please, fine, exalted and superior sense; yet common sense, if attended with humility and industry, is the best guide to beneficial truth, and the best preservative against any fatal errors in knowledge, and notorious misconducts in life. For none are, in the nature of the thing, more liable to error, than those who have a distaste for plain sober sense and dry reasoning; which yet is the case of those whose warm and elevated imagination, whose uncommon fire and vivacity, make them in love with nothing but what is striking, marvellous, and dazzling: for great wits, like great beauties, look upon mere esteem as a flat insipid thing; nothing less than admiration will content them. To gain the good-will of mankind, by being useful to them, is in their opinion, a poor, low, grovelling aim; their ambition is to draw the eyes of the world upon them, by dazzling and surprising them; a temper which draws them off from the love of truth, and consequently subjects them to gross mistakes: for they will not love truth as such; they will love it only when it happens to be surprising and uncommon, which few important truths are. The love of novelty will be the predominant passion; that of truth will only influence them, when it does not interfere with it. Perhaps nothing sooner misleads men out of the road of truth, than to have the wild, dancing light of a bright imagination playing before them. Perhaps they have too much life and spirit to have patience enough to go to the bottom of a subject, and trace up every argument, through a long tedious process, to its original. Perhaps they have that delicacy of make which fits them for a swift and speedy race, but does not enable them to carry a great weight, or to go through any long journey; whereas men of fewer ideas, who lay them in order, compare and examine them, and go on, step by step, in a gradual chain of thinking, make up by industry and caution what they want in quickness of apprehension. Be not discouraged, if you do not meet with success at first. Observe, (for it lies within the compass of any man's observation,) that he who has been long habituated to one kind of knowledge, is utterly at a loss in another, to which he is unaccustomed; till, by repeated efforts, he finds a progressive opening of his faculties; and then he wonders how he could be so long in finding out a connexion of ideas, which to a practised understanding, is very obvious. But by neglecting to use your faculties, you will, in time, lose the very power of using them. *Seed.*

§ 38. *Riches or Fortune no Excuse to exempt any from Study.*

Others there are, who plead an exemption from study, because their fortune makes them independent of the world, and they need not be beholden to it for a maintenance—that is, because their situation in life exempts them from the necessity of spending their time in servile offices and hardships, therefore they may dispose of it just as they please. It is to imagine, because God has empowered them to single out the best means of employing their hours, viz. in reading and meditation; in the highest instances of piety and charity; therefore they may throw them away in a round of impertinence, vanity, and folly. The apostle's rule, "that if any man will not work, neither should he eat," extends to the rich as well as the poor; only supposing, that there are different kinds of work assigned to each. The reason is the same in both cases, viz. that he who will do no good, ought not to receive or enjoy any. As we are all joint traders and partners in life, he forfeits his right to any share in the common stock of happiness, who does not endeavour to contribute his quota or allotted part to it: the public happiness being nothing but the sum total of each individual's contribution to it. An easy fortune does not set men free from labour and industry in general; it only exempts them from some particular kinds of labour: it is not a blessing, as it gives them liberty to do nothing at all; but as it gives them liberty wisely to choose, and steadily to prosecute, the most ennobling exercises, and the most improving employments, the pursuit of truth, the practice of virtue, the service of God who giveth them all things richly to enjoy, in short, the doing and being every thing that is commendable; though nothing merely in order to be commended. That time which others must employ in tilling the ground (which often deceives their expectation) with the sweat of their brow, they may lay out in cultivating the mind, a soil always grateful to the care of the tiller.—The sum of what I would say, is this: That, though you are not confined to any particular calling, yet you have a general one; which is, to watch over your heart, and to improve your head; to make yourself master of all those accomplishments—an enlarged compass of thought, that flowing humanity and generosity, which are necessary to become a great fortune; and of all those perfections, viz. moderation, humility, and temperance, which are necessary to bear a small one patiently; but especially it is your duty to acquire a taste for those pleasures, which, after they are tasted, go off agreeably, and leave behind them a grateful and delightful flavour on the mind. *Seed.*

§ 39. *The Pleasures resulting from a prudent Use of our Faculties.*

Happy that man, who, unembarrassed by vulgar cares, master of himself, his time, and fortune, spends his time in making himself wiser, and his fortune in making others (and therefore himself) happier: who, as the will and understanding are the two ennobling faculties of the soul, thinks himself not complete, till his understanding be beautified with the valuable furniture of knowledge, as well as his will enriched with every virtue; who has furnished himself with all the advantages to relish solitude, and enliven conversation; when serious, not sullen; and when cheerful, not indiscreetly gay; his ambition, not to be admired for a false glare of greatness, but to be beloved for the gentle and sober lustre of his wisdom and goodness. The greatest minister of state has not more business to do in a public capacity, than he, and indeed every man else, may find in the retired and still scenes of life. Even in his private walks, every thing that is visible convinceth him there is present a Being invisible. Aided by natural philosophy, he reads plain legible traces of the Divinity in every thing he meets: he sees the Deity in every tree, as well as Moses did in the burning bush, though not in so glaring a manner: and when he sees him, he adores him with the tribute of a grateful heart. *Ibid.*

§ 40. *The justly valuing and duly using the Advantages enjoyed in a Place of Education.*

One considerable advantage is, that regular method of study, too much neglected in other places, which obtains here. Nothing is more common elsewhere, than for persons to plunge, at once, into the very depth of science, (far beyond their own,) without having learned the first rudiments: nothing more common, than for some to pass themselves upon the world for great scholars, by the help of universal Dictionaries, Abridgments, and Indexes; by which means they gain an useless smattering in every branch of literature, just enough to enable them to talk fluently, or rather impertinently, upon most subjects; but not to think justly and deeply upon any: like those who have a general superficial acquaintance with almost every body. To cultivate an intimate and entire friendship with one or two worthy persons, would be of more service to them. The true genuine way to make a substantial scholar, is what takes place here,——to begin with those general principles of reasoning, upon which all science depends, and which give a light to every part of literature, to make gradual advances, a slow but sure process; to travel gently, with proper guides to direct us, through the most beautiful and fruitful regions of knowledge in general, before we fix ourselves in, and confine ourselves to, any particular province of it; it being the great secret of education, not to make a man a complete master of any branch of science, but to give his mind that freedom, openness, and extent, which shall empower him to master it, or indeed any other, whenever he shall turn the bent of his studies that way; which is best done, by setting before him, in his earlier years, a general view of the whole intellectual world: whereas, an early and entire attachment to one particular calling, narrows the abilities of the mind to that degree, that he can scarce think out of that track to which he is accustomed.

The next advantage I shall mention is, a direction in the choice of authors upon the most material subjects. For it is perhaps a great truth, that learning might be reduced to a much narrower compass, if one were to read none but original authors, those who write chiefly from their own fund of sense, without treading servilely in the steps of others.

Here, too, a generous emulation quickens our endeavours, and the friend improves the scholar. The tediousness of the way to truth is insensibly beguiled by having fellow-travellers, who keep an even pace with us: each light dispenses a brighter flame, by mixing its social rays with those of others. Here we live sequestered from noise and hurry, far from the great scene of business, vanity, and idleness; our hours are all our own. Here it is, as in the Athenian torch-race, where a series of men have successively transmitted from one to another the torch of knowledge; and no sooner has one quitted it, but another equally able takes the lamp, to dispense light to all within its sphere. *Seed.*

§ 41. *Diffidence of one's Abilities, an Indication of good Sense.*

Consider, that it is a sure indication of good sense to be diffident of it. We then, and not till then, are growing wise, when we begin to discern how weak and unwise we are. An absolute perfection of understanding is impossible: he makes the nearest approaches to it, who has the sense to discern, and the humility to acknowledge its imperfections. Modesty always sits gracefully upon youth; it covers a multitude of faults, and doubles the lustre of every virtue which it seems to hide: the perfections of men being like those flowers which appear more beautiful when their leaves are a little contracted and folded up, than when they are full blown, and display themselves, without any reserve, to the view.

We are some of us very fond of knowledge, and apt to value ourselves upon any proficiency in the sciences; one science, however, there is, worth more than all the rest, and that is, the science of living well; which shall remain, when, "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." As to new notions, and new doctrines, of which this age is very fruitful, the time will come, when we shall have no pleasure in them: nay, the time shall come, when they shall be exploded, and would have been forgotten, if they had not been preserved in those excellent books, which contain a confutation of them: like insects preserved for ages in amber, which otherwise would soon have returned to the common mass of things. But a firm belief of Christianity, and a practice suitable to it, will support and invigorate the mind to the last, and most of all at last, at that important hour, which must decide our hopes and apprehensions: and the wisdom, which, like our Saviour, cometh from above, will, through his merits, bring us thither. And indeed, all our other studies and pursuits, however different, ought to be subservient to, and centre in this grand point, the pursuit of eternal happiness, by being good in ourselves, and useful to the world.

Seed.

§ 42. *The Necessity of peculiar Temperance in Places of Education.*

From a thorough insight into human nature, with a watchful eye, and kind attention to the vanity and intemperate heat of youth, with well-weighed measures for the advancement of all useful literature, and the continual support and increase of virtue and piety, have the wise and religious institutors of the rules of conduct and government in places of education, done all that human prudence could do, to promote the most excellent and beneficial design, by the most rational and well-concerted means. They first laid the foundation well, in the discipline and regulation of the appetites. They put them under the restraint of wholesome and frugal rules, to place them out of the reach of intemperance, and to preclude an excess that would serve only to corrupt, inflame, and torment them. They are fed with food convenient for them; with simplicity yet sufficiency; with a kind though cautious hand. By this means, the seeds of vice are stifled in their birth; young persons are here removed from temptations, to which others, from a less happy situation, are too frequently exposed; and by an early habit of temperance and self-command, they may learn either to prevent all irregular solicitations, or with ease to control them. Happy are they who, by a thankful enjoyment of these advantages, and a willing compliance with these rules, lay up in store for the rest of their life, virtue, health, and peace! Vain, indeed, would be the expectation of any real progress in intellectual and moral improvements, were not the foundation thus laid in strict regularity and temperance; were the sensual appetites to be pampered in youth, or even vitiated with that degree of indulgence which an extravagant world may allow and call elegance, but in a place of education would be downright luxury. The taste of sensual pleasures must be checked and abated in them, that they may acquire a relish of the more sublime pleasures that result from reason and religion; that they may pursue them with effect, and enjoy them without avocation. And have they not in this place every motive, assistance and encouragement to engage them in a virtuous and moral life, and to animate them in the attainment of useful learning? What rank or condition of youth is there, that has not daily and hourly opportunities of laying in supplies of knowledge and virtue, that will in every station of life be equally serviceable and ornamental to themselves, and beneficial to mankind? And shall any one dare to convert a house of discipline and learning into a house of dissoluteness, extravagance, and riot? With what an aggravation of guilt do they load themselves, who at the same time that they are pursuing their own unhappiness, sacrilegiously break through all the fences of good order and government, and by their practice, seducement, and example, do what in them lies, to introduce into these schools of frugality, sobriety, and temperance, all the mad vices and vain gaieties of a licentious and voluptuous age! What have they to answer for, who, while they profligately squander away that most precious part of time, which is the only season of application and improvement, to their own irretrievable loss, encourage one another in an idle and sensual course of life, and by spreading wide the contagion, reflect a scandal upon, and strive to bring into public disesteem, the place of their education, where industry, literature, virtue, decency, and whatever else is praise-worthy, did for ages flourish and abound? Is this the genuine fruit of the pious care of our ancestors, for the security and propagation of religion and good manners, to the latest posterity? Is this at last the reward of their munificence? Or does this conduct correspond with their views, or with the just expectations and demands of your friends and your country?

Tottie.

§ 43. *Valuable Opportunities once lost cannot be recalled.*

Nor let any one vainly imagine, that the time and valuable opportunities which are now lost, can hereafter be recalled at will; or that he who has run out his youthful days in dissipation and pleasure, will have it in his power to stop when he pleases, and make a wiser use of his riper years. Yet this is too generally the fallacious hope that flatters the youth in his sensual indulgences, and leads him insensibly on in the treacherous ways of vice, till it is now too late to return. There are few, who at one plunge so totally immerge in pleasures, as to drown at once all power of reason and conscience; they promise themselves, that they can indulge their appetites to such a point only, and can check and turn them back when they have run their allotted race. I do not indeed say, that there never have been persons in whom the strong ferment of youthful lusts may have happily subsided, and who may have brought forth fruits of amendment, and displayed many eminent virtues. God forbid! that even the most licentious vices of youth should be absolutely incorrigible. But I may venture to affirm, that the instances in this case have been so rare, that it is very dangerous for any one to trust to the experiment, upon a presumption that he shall add to the number. The only sure way to make any proficiency in a virtuous life, is to set out in it betimes. It is then, when our inclinations are trained up in the way that they should lead us, that custom soon makes the best habits the most agreeable; the ways of wisdom become the ways of pleasantness, and every step we advance, they grow more easy and more delightful. But, on the contrary, when vicious, headstrong appetites are to be reclaimed, and inveterate habits to be corrected, what security can we give ourselves, that we shall have either inclination, resolution, or power to stop and turn back, and recover the right way from which we have so long and so widely wandered, and enter upon a new life, when perhaps our strength now faileth us, and we know not how near we may be to our journey's end? These reflections I have suggested principally for the sake of those, who allowing themselves in greater indulgences than are consistent with a liberal and virtuous education, give evident proofs that they are not sufficiently aware of the dangerous encroachments, and the peculiar deceitfulness of pleasurable sin. Happy for them, would they once seriously consider their ways! and no time can be more proper, than when these solemn seasons of recollection and religious discipline should particularly dispose them to seriousness and thought. They would then discover, that though they are awhile carried gently and supinely down the smooth stream of pleasure, yet soon the torrent will grow too violent to be stemmed; the waves will arise, and dash them upon rocks, or sink them in whirlpools. It is therefore the part of prudence to stop short while they may, and to divert their course into a different channel; which, whatever obstructions and difficulties they may labour with at first, will every day become more practicable and pleasing, and will assuredly carry them to a serene and secure haven.

Tottie.

§ 44. *The Beginnings of Evil to be resisted.*

Think not, as I am afraid too many do, that because your passions have not hurried you into atrocious deeds, they have therefore wrought no mischief, and have left no sting behind them. By a continued series of loose, though apparently trivial gratifications, the heart is often as thoroughly corrupted, as by the commission of any one of those enormous crimes which spring from great ambition, or great revenge. Habit gives the passions strength, while the absence of glaring guilt seemingly justifies them; and, unawakened by remorse, the sinner proceeds in his course, till he wax bold in guilt, and become ripe for ruin: for, by gradual and latent steps, the destruction of our virtues advances. Did the evil unveil itself at the beginning; did the storm which is to overthrow our peace, discover, as it rose, all its horrors, precautions would more frequently be taken against it. But we are imperceptibly betrayed; and from one licentious attachment, one criminal passion, are, by a train of consequences, drawn on to another, till the government of our minds is irrecoverably lost. The enticing and the odious passions are, in this respect, similar in their process; and, though by different roads, conduct at last to the same issue.

Blair.

§ 45. *Order to be observed in Amusements.*

Observe order in your amusements; that is, allow them no more than their proper place; study to keep them within due bounds; mingle them in a temperate succession with serious duties, and the higher business of life. Human life cannot proceed, to advantage, without some measure of relaxation and entertainment. We require relief from care. We are not formed for a perpetual stretch of serious thought. By too intense and continued application, our feeble powers would soon be worn out. At the same time, from our propensity to ease and pleasure, amusement proves, among all ranks of men, the most dangerous foe to order: for it tends incessantly to usurp and encroach, to widen its territories, to thrust itself into the place of more important concerns, and thereby to disturb and counteract the natural course of things. One frivolous amusement indulged out of season, will often carry perplexity and confusion through a long succession of affairs.

Amusements, therefore, though they be of an innocent kind, require steady government, to keep them within a due and limited province. But such as are of an irregular and vicious nature, require not to be governed, but to be banished from every orderly society. As soon as a man seeks his happiness from the gaming-table, the midnight revel, and the other haunts of licentiousness, confusion seizes upon him as its own. There will no longer be order in his family, nor order in his affairs, nor order in his time. The most important concerns of life are abandoned.

Even the order of nature is by such persons inverted; night is changed into day, and day into night. Character, honour, and interest itself, are trampled under foot. You may with certainty prognosticate the ruin of these men to be just at hand. Disorder, arisen to its height, has nearly accomplished its work. The spots of death are upon them. Let every one who would escape the pestilential contagion, fly with haste from their company. *Blair.*

§ 46. *Order to be preserved in your Society.*

Preserve order in the arrangement of your society; that is, entangle not yourselves in a perpetual and promiscuous crowd; select with prudence and propriety, those with whom you choose to associate; let company and retreat succeed each other at measured intervals. There can be no order in his life, who allots not a due share of his time to retirement and reflection. He can neither prudently arrange his temporal affairs, nor properly attend to his spiritual interests. He lives not to himself, but to the world. By continual dissipation, he is rendered giddy and thoughtless. He contracts unavoidably from the world that spirit of disorder and confusion which is so prevalent in it.

It is not a sufficient preservation against this evil, that the circles of society in which you are engaged are not of a libertine and vicious kind. If they withdraw you from that attention to yourselves, and your domestic concerns, which becomes a good man, they are subversive of order, and inconsistent with your duty. What is innocent in itself, degenerates into a crime, from being carried to excess; and idle, trifling society, is nearly a-kin to such as is corrupting. One of the first principles of order is, to learn to be happy at home. It is in domestic retreat that every wise man finds his chief satisfaction. It is there he forms the plans which regulate his public conduct. He who knows not how to enjoy himself when alone, can never be long happy abroad. To his vacant mind, company may afford a temporary relief; but when forced to return to himself, he will be so much more oppressed and languid. Whereas, by a due mixture of public and private life, we keep free of the snares of both, and enjoy each to greater advantage. *Ibid.*

§ 47. *A due Regard to Order necessary in Business, Time, Expense, and Amusements.*

Throughout your affairs, your time, your expense, your amusements, your society, the principle of order must be equally carried, if you expect to reap any of its happy fruits. For if into any one of those great departments of life you suffer disorder to enter, it will spread through all the rest. In vain, for instance, you purpose to be orderly in the conduct of your affairs, if you be irregular in the distribution of your time. In vain you attempt to regulate your expense, if into your amusements, or your society, disorder has crept. You have admitted a principle of confusion which will defeat all your plans, and perplex and entangle what you sought to arrange. Uniformity is above all things necessary to order. If you desire that any thing should proceed according to method and rule, "let all things be done in order."

I must also admonish you, that in small, as well as in great affairs, a due regard to order is requisite. I mean not, that you ought to look on those minute attentions, which are apt to occupy frivolous minds, as connected either with virtue or wisdom: but I exhort you to remember, that disorder, like other immoralities, frequently takes rise from inconsiderable beginnings. They who, in the lesser transactions of life, are totally negligent of rule, will be in hazard of extending that negligence, by degrees, to such affairs and duties as will render them criminal. Remissness grows on all who study not to guard against it; and it is only by frequent exercise, that the habits of order and punctuality can be thoroughly confirmed. *Blair.*

§ 48. *Idleness avoided by the Observation of Order.*

By attending to order, you avoid idleness, that most fruitful source of crimes and evils. Acting upon a plan, meeting every thing in its own place, you constantly find innocent and useful employment for time. You are never at a loss how to dispose of your hours, or to fill up life agreeably. In the course of human action, there are two extremes equally dangerous to virtue; the multiplicity of affairs, and the total want of them. The man of order stands in the middle between these two extremes, and suffers from neither: he is occupied, but not oppressed. Whereas the disorderly, overloading one part of time, and leaving another vacant, are at one period overwhelmed with business, and at another either idle through want of employment, or indolent through perplexity. Those seasons of indolence and idleness, which recur so often in their life, are their most dangerous moments. The mind, unhappy in its situation, and clinging to every object which can occupy or amuse it, is then aptest to throw itself into the arms of every vice and folly.

Farther, by the preservation of order, you check inconstancy and levity. Fickle by nature is the human heart. It is fond of change; and perpetually tends to start aside from the straight line of conduct. Hence arises the propriety of bringing ourselves under subjection to method and rule; which, though at first it may prove constraining, yet by degrees, and from the experience of its happy effects, becomes natural and agreeable. It rectifies those irregularities of temper and manners to which we give the name of caprice; and which are distinguished characteristics of a disorderly mind. It is the parent of steadiness of conduct. It forms consistency of character. It is the ground of all the confidence we repose in one another. For, the disorderly we know not where to find. In him only can we place any trust, who is uniform and regular; who lives by principle, not by humour; who acts upon a plan, and not by desultory motions. *Ibid.*

§ 49. *Order essential to Self-enjoyment and Felicity.*

Consider also how important it is to your self-enjoyment and felicity. Order is the source of peace; and peace is the highest of all temporal blessings. Order is indeed the only region in which tranquillity dwells. The very mention of confusion imports disturbance and vexation. Is it possible for that man to be happy, who cannot look into the state of his affairs, or the tenor of his conduct, without discerning all to be embroiled? who is either in the midst of remorse for what he has neglected to do, or in the midst of hurry to overtake what he finds, too late, was necessary to have been done? Such as live according to order, may be compared to the celestial bodies, which move in regular courses, and by stated laws; whose influence is beneficent; whose operations are quiet and tranquil. The disorderly resemble those tumultuous elements on earth, which, by sudden and violent irruptions, disturb the course of nature. By mismanagement of affairs, by excess in expense, by irregularity in the indulgence of company and amusement, they are perpetually creating molestation both to themselves and others. They depart from their road to seek pleasure; and instead of it, they every where raise up sorrows. Being always found out of their proper place, they of course interfere and jar with others. The disorders which they raise, never fail to spread beyond their own line, and to involve many in confusion and distress; whence they necessarily become the authors of tumult and contention, of discord and enmity. Whereas order is the foundation of union. It allows every man to carry on his own affairs without disturbing his neighbour. It is the golden chain which holds together the societies of men in friendship and peace. *Blair.*

§ 50. *Experience to be anticipated by Reflection.*

It is observed, that the young and the ignorant are always the most violent in pursuit. The knowledge which is forced upon them by longer acquaintance with the world, moderates their impetuosity. Study then to anticipate, by reflection, that knowledge which experience often purchases at too dear a price. Inure yourselves to frequent consideration of the emptiness of those pleasures which excite so much strife and commotion among mankind. Think how much more of true enjoyment is lost by the violence of passion, than by the want of those things which give occasion to that passion. Persuade yourselves that the favour of God, and the possession of virtue, form the chief happiness of the rational nature. Let a contented mind, and a peaceful life, hold the next place in your estimation. These are the conclusions which the wise and thinking part of mankind have always formed. To these conclusions, after having run the race of passion, you will probably come at the last. By forming them betimes, you would make a seasonable escape from that tempestuous region, through which none can pass without suffering misery, contracting guilt, and undergoing severe remorse. *Ibid.*

§ 51. *The Beginnings of Passion to be opposed.*

Oppose early the beginnings of passion. Avoid particularly all such objects as are apt to excite passions which you know to predominate within you. As soon as you find the tempest rising, have recourse to every proper method, either of allaying its violence, or of escaping to a calmer shore. Hasten to call up emotions of an opposite nature. Study to conquer one passion by means of some other which is of less dangerous tendency. Never account any thing small or trivial, which is in hazard of introducing disorder into your heart. Never make light of any desire which you feel gaining such progress as to threaten entire dominion. Blandishing it will appear at the first. As a gentle and innocent emotion, it may steal into the heart; but as it advances, is likely to pierce you through with many sorrows. What you indulged as a favourite amusement, will shortly become a serious business, and in the end may prove the burden of your life. Most of our passions flatter us in their rise, but their beginnings are treacherous: their growth is imperceptible; and the evils which they carry in their train, lie concealed, until their dominion is established. What Solomon says of one of them, holds true of them all, "that their beginning is as when one letteth out water." It issues from a small chink, which once might have been easily stopped; but being neglected, it is soon widened by the stream, till the bank is at last totally thrown down, and the flood is at liberty to deluge the whole plain. *Blair.*

§ 52. *The Government of Temper, as included in the Keeping of the Heart.*

Passions are quick and strong emotions, which by degrees subside. Temper is the disposition which remains after these emotions are past, and which forms the habitual propensity of the soul. The one are like the stream when it is swollen by the torrent, and ruffled by the winds; the other resembles it when running within its bed, with its natural force and velocity. The influence of temper is more silent and imperceptible than that of passion; it operates with less violence; but as its operation is constant, it produces effects no less considerable. It is evident, therefore, that it highly deserves to be considered in a religious view.

Many, indeed, are averse to behold it in this light. They place a good temper upon the same footing with a healthy constitution of body. They consider it as a natural felicity which some enjoy; but for the want of which, others are not morally culpable, nor accountable to God: and hence the opinion has sometimes prevailed, that a bad temper might be consistent with a state of grace. If this were true, it would overturn that whole doctrine, of which the gospel is so full, "that regeneration, or change of nature, is the essential characteristic of a christian." It would suppose, that grace might dwell amidst malevolence and rancour, and that heaven might be enjoyed by such as are strangers to charity and love.—It will readily be admitted that some, by the original frame of their mind, are more favourably inclined than others, towards certain good dispositions and habits. But this affords no justification to those who neglect to oppose the corruptions to which they are prone. Let no man imagine, that the human heart is a soil altogether unsusceptible of culture! or that the worst temper may not, through the assistance of grace, be reformed by attention and discipline. Settled depravity of temper is always owing to our own indulgence. If, in place of checking, we nourish that malignity of disposition to which we are inclined, all the consequences will be placed to our account, and every excuse, from natural constitution, be rejected at the tribunal of Heaven.

Ibid.

§ 53. *A peaceable Temper and condescending Manners recommended.*

What first presents itself to be recommended, is a peaceable temper; a disposition averse to give offence, and desirous of cultivating harmony, and amicable intercourse in society. This supposes yielding and condescending manners, unwillingness to contend with others about trifles, and, in contests that are unavoidable, proper moderation of spirit. Such a temper is the first principle of self-enjoyment; it is the basis of all order and happiness among mankind. The positive and contentious, the rude and quarrelsome, are the bane of society; they seem destined to blast the small share of comfort which nature has here allotted to man. But they cannot disturb the peace of others, more than they break their own. The hurricane rages first in their own bosom, before it is let forth upon the world. In the tempest which they raise, they are always lost; and frequently it is their lot to perish.

A peaceable temper must be supported by a candid one, or a disposition to view the conduct of others with fairness and impartiality. This stands opposed to a jealous and suspicious temper; which ascribes every action to the worst motive, and throws a black shade over every character. As you would be happy in yourselves, or in your connexions with others, guard against this malignant spirit. Study that charity which thinketh no evil; that temper which, without degenerating into credulity, will dispose you to be just; and which can allow you to observe an error, without imputing it as a crime. Thus you will be kept free from that continual irritation which imaginary injuries raise in a suspicious breast; and will walk among men as your brethren, not your enemies.

But to be peaceable, and to be candid, is not all that is required of a good man. He must cultivate a kind, generous, and sympathizing temper, which feels for distress wherever it is beheld; which enters into the concerns of his friends with ardour; and to all with whom he has intercourse, is gentle, obliging, and humane. How amiable appears such a disposition, when contrasted with a malicious or envious temper, which wraps itself up in its own narrow interests, looks with an evil eye on the success of others, and with an unnatural satisfaction feeds on their disappointments or miseries! How little does he know of the true happiness of life, who is a stranger to that intercourse of good offices and kind affections, which, by a pleasing charm, attach men to one another, and circulate joy from heart to heart! *Blair.*

§ 54. *Numerous Occasions offer for the Exertion of a benevolent Temper.*

You are not to imagine that a benevolent temper finds no exercise, unless when opportunities offer of performing actions of high generosity, or of extensive utility; these may seldom occur: the condition of the greater part of mankind in a good measure precludes them. But in the ordinary round of human affairs, a thousand occasions daily present themselves of mitigating the vexations which others suffer, of soothing their minds, of aiding their interest, of promoting their cheerfulness, or ease. Such occasions may relate to the smaller incidents of life: but let us remember that of small incidents the system of human life is chiefly composed. The attentions which respect these, when suggested by real benignity of temper, are often more material to the happiness of those around us, than actions which carry the appearance of greater dignity and splendour. No wise or good man ought to account any rules of behaviour as below his regard, which tend to cement the great brotherhood of mankind in comfortable union.

Particularly in the course of that familiar intercourse which belongs to domestic life, all the virtues of temper find an ample range. It is very unfortunate, that within that circle, men too often think themselves at liberty to give unrestrained vent to the caprice of passion and humour. Whereas there, on the contrary, more than any where, it concerns them to attend to the government of their heart; to check what is violent in their tempers, and to soften what is harsh in their manners. For there the temper is formed. There the real character displays itself. The forms of the world disguise men when abroad; but within his own family, every man is known to be what he truly is.—In all our intercourse, then, with others, particularly in that which is closest and most intimate, let us cultivate a peaceable, a candid, a gentle, and friendly temper. This is the temper to which, by repeated injunctions, our holy religion seeks to form us. This was the temper of Christ. This is the temper of Heaven. *Blair.*

§ 55. *A contented Temper the greatest Blessing, and most material Requisite to the proper Discharge of our Duties.*

A contented temper is one of the greatest blessings that can be enjoyed by man, and one of the most material requisites to the proper discharge of the duties of every station. For a fretful and discontented temper renders one incapable of performing aright any part in life. It is unthankful and impious towards God; and towards men provoking and unjust. It is a gangrene which preys on the vitals, and infects the whole constitution with disease and putrefaction. Subdue pride and vanity, and you will take the most effectual method of eradicating this distemper. You will no longer behold the objects around you with jaundiced eyes. You will take in good part the blessings which Providence is pleased to bestow, and the degree of favour which your fellow-creatures are disposed to grant you. Viewing yourselves, with all your imperfections and failings, in a just light, you will rather be surprised at your enjoying so many good things, than discontented because there are any which you want. From an humble and contented temper, will spring a cheerful one. This, if not in itself a virtue, is at least the garb in which virtue should be always arrayed. Piety and goodness ought never to be marked with that dejection which sometimes takes rise from superstition, but which is the proper portion only of guilt. At the same time, the cheerfulness belonging to virtue is to be carefully distinguished from that light and giddy temper which characterizes folly, and is so often found among the dissipated and vicious part of mankind. Their gaiety is owing to a total want of reflection; and brings with it the usual consequences of an unthinking habit, shame, remorse, and heaviness of heart, in the end. The cheerfulness of a well regulated mind springs from a good conscience and the favour of Heaven, and is bounded by temperance and reason. It makes a man happy in himself, and promotes the happiness of all around him. It is the clear and calm sunshine of a mind illuminated by piety and virtue. It crowns all other good dispositions, and comprehends the general effect which they ought to produce on the heart. *Ibid.*

§ 56. *The Desire of Praise subservient to many valuable Purposes.*

To a variety of good purposes it is subservient, and on many occasions co-operates with the principle of virtue. It awakens us from sloth, invigorates activity, and stimulates our efforts to excel. It has given rise to most of the splendid, and to many of the useful enterprises of men. It has animated the patriot, and fired the hero. Magnanimity, generosity, and fortitude, are what all mankind admire. Hence, such as were actuated by the desire of extensive fame, have been prompted to deeds which either participated of the spirit, or at least carried the appearance, of distinguished virtue. The desire of praise is generally connected with all the finer sensibilities of human nature. It affords a ground on which exhortation, counsel, and reproof, can work a proper effect. Whereas, to be entirely destitute of this passion betokens an ignoble mind, on which no moral impression is easily made. Where there is no desire of praise, there will be also no sense of reproach; and if that be extinguished, one of the principal guards of virtue is removed, and the mind thrown open to many opprobrious pursuits.

He whose countenance never glowed with shame, and whose heart never beat at the sound of praise, is not destined for any honourable distinction; is likely to grovel in the sordid quest of gain; or to slumber life away in the indolence of selfish pleasures.

Abstracted from the sentiments which are connected with it as a principle of action, the esteem of our fellow-creatures is an object which, on account of the advantages it brings, may be lawfully pursued. It is necessary to our success in every fair and honest undertaking. Not only our private interest, but our public usefulness, depends, in a great measure, upon it. The sphere of our influence is contracted or enlarged, in proportion to the degree in which we enjoy the good opinion of the public. Men listen with an unwilling ear to one whom they do not honour; while a respected character adds weight to example, and authority to counsel. To desire the esteem of others for the sake of its effects, is not only allowable, but in many cases is our duty: and to be totally indifferent to praise or censure, is so far from being a virtue, that it is a real defect in character.

Blair.

§ 57. *Excessive Desire of Praise tends to corrupt the Heart, and to create disregard to the Admonitions of Conscience.*

An excessive love of praise never fails to undermine the regard due to conscience, and to corrupt the heart. It turns off the eye of the mind from the ends which it ought chiefly to keep in view; and sets up a false light for its guide. Its influence is the more dangerous, as the colour which it assumes is often fair; and its garb and appearance are nearly allied to that of virtue. The love of glory, I before admitted, may give birth to actions which are both splendid and useful. At a distance they strike the eye with uncommon brightness; but on a nearer and stricter survey, their lustre is often tarnished. They are found to want that sacred and venerable dignity which characterizes true virtue. Little passions and selfish interests entered into the motives of those who performed them. They were jealous of a competitor. They sought to humble a rival. They looked round for spectators to admire them. All is magnanimity, generosity, and courage, to public view. But the ignoble source whence these seeming virtues take their rise, is hidden. Without appears the hero; within, is found the man of dust and clay. Consult such as have been intimately connected with the followers of renown; and seldom or never will you find, that they held them in the same esteem with those who viewed them from afar. There is nothing except simplicity of intention, and purity of principle, that can stand the test of near approach and strict examination.

Ibid.

§ 58. *Sense of Right and Wrong, independent of Religion.*

Mankind certainly have a sense of right and wrong, independent of religious belief; but experience shows, that the allurements of present pleasure, and the impetuosity of passion, are sufficient to prevent men from acting agreeably to this moral sense, unless it be supported by religion, the influence of which upon the imagination and passions, if properly directed, is extremely powerful. We shall readily acknowledge that many of the greatest enemies of religion have been distinguished for their honour, probity, and good nature. But it is to be considered, that many virtues, as well as vices, are constitutional. A cool and equal temper, a dull imagination, and unfeeling heart, ensure the possession of many virtues, or rather, are a security against many vices. They may produce temperance, chastity, honesty, prudence, and a harmless, inoffensive behaviour. Whereas keen passions, a warm imagination, and great sensibility of heart, lay a natural foundation for prodigality, debauchery, and ambition: attended, however, with the seeds of all the social and most heroic virtues. Such a temperature of mind carries along with it a check to its constitutional vices, by rendering those possessed of it peculiarly susceptible of religious impressions. They often appear indeed to be the greatest enemies to religion, but that is entirely owing to their impatience of its restraints. Its most dangerous enemies have ever been among the temperate and chaste philosophers, void of passion and sensibility, who had no vicious appetites to be restrained by its influence, and who were unsusceptible of its terrors or its pleasures. *Gregory.*

§ 59. *Religion not founded on Weakness of Mind.*

Several of those who have surmounted what they call religious prejudices themselves, affect to treat such as are not ashamed to avow their regard to religion, as men of weak understandings and feeble minds: but this shows either want of candour, or great ignorance of human nature. The fundamental articles of religion have been very generally believed by men the most distinguished for acuteness and accuracy of judgment. Nay, it is unjust to infer the weakness of a person's head on other subjects, from his attachment even to the fooleries of superstition. Experience shows, that when the imagination is heated, and the affections deeply interested, they level all distinctions of understanding; yet this affords no presumption of a shallow judgment in subjects where the imagination and passions have no influence. *Ibid.*

§ 60. *Effects of Religion, Scepticism and Infidelity.*

Feebleness of mind is a reproach frequently thrown, not only upon such as have a sense of religion, but upon all who possess warm, open, cheerful tempers, and hearts peculiarly disposed to love and friendship. But the reproach is ill founded. Strength of mind does not consist in a peevish temper, in a hard and inflexible heart, and in bidding defiance to God Almighty: it consists in an active, resolute spirit; in a spirit that enables a man to act his part in the world with propriety; and to bear the misfortunes of life with uniform fortitude and dignity. This is a strength of mind, which neither atheism nor universal scepticism will ever be able to inspire. On the contrary, their tendency will be found to chill all the powers of imagination; to depress spirit as well as genius; to sour the temper and contract the heart. The highest religious spirit, and veneration for Providence, breathes in the writings of the ancient stoics; a sect distinguished for producing the most active, intrepid, virtuous men, that ever did honour to human nature.

Can it be pretended, that atheism or universal scepticism have any tendency to form such characters? Do they tend to inspire that magnanimity and elevation of mind, that superiority to selfish and sensual gratifications, that contempt of danger and of death, when the cause of virtue, of liberty, or their country, require it, which distinguish the characters of patriots and heroes? Or is their influence more favourable on the humbler and gentler virtues of private and domestic life? Do they soften the heart, and render it more delicately sensible of the thousand nameless duties and endearments of a husband, a father, or a friend? Do they produce that habitual serenity and cheerfulness of temper, that gaiety of heart, which makes a man beloved as a companion? or do they dilate the heart with the liberal and generous sentiments, and that love of human kind, which would render him revered and blessed as the patron of depressed merit, the friend of the widow and orphan, the refuge and support of the poor and the unhappy?

The general opinion of mankind, that there is a strong connexion between a religious disposition and a feeling heart, appears from the universal dislike which all men have to infidelity in the fair sex. We not only look on it as removing the principal security we have for their virtue, but as the strongest proof of their want of that softness and delicate sensibility of heart, which peculiarly endears them to us, and more effectually secures their empire over us, than any quality they can possess.

There are, indeed, some men who can persuade themselves, that there is no supreme intelligence who directs the course of nature; who can see those they have been connected with by the strongest bonds of nature and friendship gradually disappearing; who are persuaded, that this separation is final and eternal; and who expect, that they themselves shall soon sink down after them into nothing; and yet such men appear easy and contented. But to a sensible heart, and particularly to a heart softened by past endearments of love or friendship, such opinions are attended with gloom inexpressible; they strike a damp into all the pleasures and enjoyments of life, and cut off those prospects which alone can comfort the soul under certain distresses, where all other aid is feeble and ineffectual.

Scepticism, or suspense of judgment, as to the truth of the great articles of religion, is attended with the same fatal effects. Wherever the affections are deeply interested, a state of suspense is more intolerable, and more distracting to the mind, than the sad assurance of the evil which is most dreaded.

Gregory.

§ 61. *Religion considered as a Science.*

Religion may be considered in three different views. First, as containing doctrines relating to the being and perfections of God, his moral administration of the world, a future state of existence, and particular communications to mankind, by an immediate supernatural revelation.—Secondly, as a rule of life and manners.—Thirdly, as the source of certain peculiar affections of the mind, which either give pleasure or pain, according to the particular genius and spirit of the religion that inspires them.

In the first of these views, which gives a foundation to all religious belief, and on which the other two depend, Reason is principally concerned. On this subject, the greatest efforts of human genius and application have been exerted, and with the most desirable success, in those great and important articles that seem most immediately to affect the interest and happiness of mankind. But when our inquiries here are pushed to a certain length, we find that Providence has set bounds to our reason, and even to our capacities of apprehension. This is particularly the case with respect to infinity, and the moral œconomy of the Deity. The objects are here, in a great measure, beyond the reach of our conception; and induction, from experience, on which all our other reasonings are founded, cannot be applied to a subject altogether dissimilar to any thing we are acquainted with.—Many of the fundamental articles of religion are such, that the mind may have the fullest conviction of their truth, but they must be viewed at a distance, and are rather the objects of silent and religious veneration, than of metaphysical disquisition. If the mind attempts to bring them to a nearer view, it is confounded with their strangeness and immensity.

When we pursue our inquiries into any part of nature beyond certain bounds, we find ourselves involved in perplexity and darkness. But there is this remarkable difference between these and religious inquiries: in the investigation of nature, we can always make a progress in knowledge, and approximate to the truth by the proper exertion of genius and observation. But our inquiries into religious subjects are confined within very narrow bounds; nor can any force of reason or application lead the mind one step beyond that impenetrable gulf, which separates the visible and invisible world.

Though the articles of religious belief, which fall within the comprehension of mankind, and seem essential to their happiness, are few and simple, yet ingenious men have contrived to erect them into most tremendous systems of metaphysical subtlety, which will long remain monuments both of the extent and the weakness of human understanding. The pernicious consequences of such systems, have been various. By attempting to establish too much, they have hurt the foundation of the most interesting principles of religion.—Most men are educated in a belief of the peculiar and distinguishing opinions of some one religious sect or other. They are taught, that all these are equally founded on divine authority, or the clearest deductions of reason; by which means their system of religion hangs so much together, that one part cannot be shaken without endangering the whole. But wherever any freedom of inquiry is allowed, the absurdity of some of these opinions, and the uncertain foundation of others, cannot be concealed. This naturally begets a general distrust of the whole, with that fatal lukewarmness in religion, which is its necessary consequence.

The very habit of frequent reasoning and disputing upon religious subjects, diminishes that reverence with which the mind would otherwise consider them. This seems particularly to be the case, when men presume to enter into a minute scrutiny of the views and economy of Providence, in the administration of the world; why the Supreme Being made it as it is; the freedom of his actions; and many other such questions, infinitely beyond our reach. The natural tendency of this, is to lessen that awful veneration with which we ought always to contemplate the Divinity, but which can never be preserved, when men canvass his ways with such unwarrantable freedom. Accordingly we find, amongst those sectaries where such disquisitions have principally prevailed, that he has been mentioned and even addressed with the most indecent and shocking familiarity. The truly devotional spirit, whose chief foundation and characteristic is genuine and profound humility, is not to be looked for among such persons.

Another bad effect of this speculative theology, has been to withdraw people's attention from its practical duties.—We usually find, that those who are most distinguished by their excessive zeal for opinions in religion, show great moderation and coolness as to its precepts; and their great severity in this respect, is commonly exerted against a few vices where the heart is but little concerned and to which their own dispositions preserved them from any temptations.

But the worst effects of speculative and controversial theology, are those which it produces on the temper and affections.—When the mind is kept constantly embarrassed in a perplexed and thorny path, where it can find no steady light to show the way, nor foundation to rest on, the temper loses its native cheerfulness, and contracts a gloom and severity, partly from the chagrin of disappointment, and partly from the social and kind affections being extinguished for want of exercise. When this evil is exasperated by opposition and dispute, the consequences prove very fatal to the peace of society; especially when men are persuaded, that their holding certain opinions entitles them to the divine favour; and that those who differ from them, are devoted to eternal destruction. This persuasion breaks at once all the ties of society. The toleration of men who hold erroneous opinions, is considered as conniving at their destroying not only themselves, but all others who come within the reach of their influence. This produces that cruel and implacable spirit, which has so often disgraced the cause of religion, and dishonoured humanity.

Yet the effects of religious controversy have sometimes proved beneficial to mankind. That spirit of free inquiry, which incited the first Reformers to shake off the yoke of ecclesiastical tyranny, naturally begot just sentiments of civil liberty, especially when irritated by persecution. When such sentiments came to be united with that bold enthusiasm, that severity of temper and manners that distinguished some of the reformed sects, they produced those resolute and inflexible men, who alone were able to assert the cause of liberty, in an age when the Christian world was enervated by luxury or superstition; and to such men we owe that freedom and happy constitution which we at present enjoy.—But these advantages of religious enthusiasm have been but accidental.

In general it would appear, that religion, considered as a science, in the manner it has been usually treated, is but little beneficial to mankind, neither tending to enlarge the understanding, sweeten the temper, or mend the heart. At the same time, the labours of ingenious men, in explaining obscure and difficult passages of sacred writ, have been highly useful and necessary. And though it is natural for men to carry their speculations, on a subject that so nearly concerns their present and eternal happiness, farther than reason extends, or than is clearly and expressly revealed; yet these can be followed by no bad consequences, if they are carried on with that modesty and reverence which the subject requires. They become pernicious only when they are formed into systems, to which the same credit and submission is required as to Holy Writ itself. *Gregory.*

§ 62. *Religion considered as a Rule of Life and Manners.*

We shall now proceed to consider religion as a rule of life and manners. In this respect, its influence is very extensive and beneficial, even when disfigured by the wildest superstition; as it is able to check and conquer those passions, which reason and philosophy are too weak to encounter. But it is much to be regretted, that the application of religion to this end, hath not been attended to with that care which the importance of the subject required.—The speculative part of religion seems generally to have engrossed the attention of men of genius. This has been the fate of all the useful and practical arts of life; and the application of religion, to the regulation of life and manners, must be considered entirely as a practical art.—The causes of this neglect, seem to be these: men of a philosophical genius have an aversion to all application, where the active powers of their own minds are not immediately employed. But in acquiring any practical art, a philosopher is obliged to spend most of his time in employments where his genius and understanding have no exercise. The fate of the practical arts of medicine and religion have been pretty similar: the object of the one, is to cure the diseases of the body; of the other, to cure the diseases of the mind. The progress and degrees of perfection of both these arts ought to be estimated by no other standard, than their success in the cure of the diseases to which they are severally applied. In medicine, the facts on which the art depends, are so numerous and complicated, so misrepresented by fraud, credulity, or a heated imagination, that there has hardly ever been found a truly philosophical genius who has attempted the practical part of it. There are, indeed, many obstacles of different kinds, which occur to render any improvement in the practice of physic a matter of the utmost difficulty, at least whilst the profession rests on its present narrow foundation. Almost all physicians who have been men of ingenuity, have amused themselves in forming theories, which gave exercise to their invention, and at the same time contributed to their reputation. Instead of being at the trouble of making observations themselves, they culled, out of the promiscuous multitude already made, such as best suited their purpose, and dressed them up in the way their system required. In consequence of this, the history of medicine does not so much exhibit the history of a progressive art, as a history of opinions which prevailed perhaps for twenty or thirty years, and then sunk into contempt and oblivion. The case has been nearly similar in practical divinity: but this is attended with much greater difficulties than the practical part of medicine; in this last, nothing is required but assiduous and accurate observation, and a good understanding to direct the proper application of such observation.

Gregory.

§ 63. *How Religion is to be applied to cure the Diseases of the Mind.*

To cure the diseases of the mind, there is required that intimate knowledge of the human heart, which must be drawn from life itself, and which books can never teach; of the various disguises under which vice recommends herself to the imagination; of the artful association of ideas which she forms there; and of the many nameless circumstances that soften the heart and render it accessible. It is likewise necessary to have a knowledge of the arts of insinuation and persuasion, of the art of breaking false and unnatural associations of ideas, or inducing counter-associations, and opposing one passion to another; and after all this knowledge is acquired, the successful application of it to practice depends, in a considerable degree, on powers, which no extent of understanding can confer.

Vice does not depend so much on a perversion of the understanding, as of the imagination and passions, and on habits originally founded on these. A vicious man is generally sensible enough that his conduct is wrong; he knows that vice is contrary both to his duty and to his interest; and therefore, all laboured reasoning, to satisfy his understanding of these truths, is useless, because the disease does not lie in the understanding. The evil is seated in the heart. The imaginations and passions are engaged on its side; and to them the cure must be applied. Here has been the general defect of writings and sermons, intended to reform mankind. Many ingenious and sensible remarks are made on the several duties of religion, and very judicious arguments are brought to enforce them. Such performances may be attended to with pleasure, by pious and well disposed persons, who likewise may derive from thence useful instruction for their conduct in life. The wicked and profligate, if ever books of this sort fall in their way, very readily allow, that what they contain are great and eternal truths; but they leave no lasting impression. If any thing can rouse, it is the power of lively and pathetic description, which traces and lays open their hearts through all their windings and disguises, makes them see and confess their own characters in all their deformity and horror, impresses their hearts, and interests their passions by all the motives of love, gratitude, and fear, the prospect of rewards and punishments, and whatever other motives religion or nature may dictate. But to do this effectually, requires very different powers from those of the understanding: a lively and well regulated imagination is essentially requisite.

Gregory.

§ 64. *On Public Preaching.*

In public addresses to an audience, the great end of reformation is most effectually promoted; because all the powers of voice and action, all the arts of eloquence, may be brought to give their assistance. But some of those arts depend on gifts of nature, and cannot be attained by any strength of genius or understanding: even where nature has been liberal of those necessary requisites, they must be cultivated by much practice, before the proper exercise of them can be acquired. Thus, a public speaker may have a voice that is musical and of great compass; but it requires much time and labour to attain its just modulation, and that variety of flexion and tone, which a pathetic discourse requires. The same difficulty attends the acquisition of that propriety of action, that power over the expressive features of the countenance, particularly of the eyes, so necessary to command the hearts and passions of an audience.

It is usually thought that a preacher, who feels what he is saying himself, will naturally speak with that tone of voice and expression in his countenance, that best suits the subject, and which cannot fail to move his audience: thus it is said, a person under the influence of fear, anger, or sorrow, looks and speaks in the manner naturally expressive of these emotions. This is true in some measure; but it can never be supposed, that any preacher will be able to enter into his subject with such real warmth upon every occasion. Besides, every prudent man will be afraid to abandon himself so entirely to any impression, as he must do to produce this effect. Most men, when strongly affected by any passion or emotion, have some peculiarity in their appearance, which does not belong to the natural expression of such an emotion. If this be not properly corrected, a public speaker, who is really warm and animated with his subject, may nevertheless make a very ridiculous and contemptible figure. It is the business of art, to show nature in her most amiable and graceful forms, and not with those peculiarities in which she appears in particular instances; and it is this difficulty of properly representing nature, that renders the eloquence and action both of the pulpit and the stage, acquisitions of such difficult attainment.

But, besides those talents inherent in the preacher himself, an intimate knowledge of nature will suggest the necessity of attending to certain external circumstances, which operate powerfully on the mind, and prepare it for receiving the designed impressions. Such, in particular, is the proper regulation of church music, and the solemnity and pomp of public worship. Independent of the effect that these particulars have on the imagination, it might be expected, that a just taste, a sense of decency and propriety, would make them more attended to than we find they are. We acknowledge that they have been abused, and have occasioned the grossest superstition; but this universal propensity to carry them to excess, is the strongest proof that the attachment to them is deeply rooted in human nature, and consequently that it is the business of good sense to regulate, and not vainly to attempt to extinguish it. Many religious sects, in their infancy, have supported themselves without any of these external assistances; but when time has abated the fervor of their first zeal, we always find that their public worship has been conducted with the most remarkable coldness and inattention, unless supported by well-regulated ceremonies. In fact, it will be found, that those sects who at their commencement have been most distinguished for a religious enthusiasm that despised all forms, and the genius of whose tenets could not admit the use of any, have either been of short duration, or ended in infidelity.

The many difficulties that attend the practical art of making religion influence the manners and lives of mankind, by acquiring a command over the imagination and passions, have made it too generally neglected, even by the most eminent of the clergy for learning and good sense. These have rather chosen to confine themselves to a track, where they were sure to excel by the force of their own genius, than to attempt a road where their success was doubtful, and where they might be outshone by men greatly their inferiors. It has therefore been principally cultivated by men of lively imaginations, possessed of some natural advantages of voice and manner. But as no art can ever become very beneficial to mankind, unless it be under the direction of genius and good sense, it has too often happened, that the art we are now speaking of has become subservient to the wildest fanaticism, sometimes to the gratification of vanity, and sometimes to still more unworthy purposes.

Gregory.

§ 65. *Religion considered as exciting Devotion.*

The third view of religion considers it as engaging and interesting the affections, and comprehends the devotional or sentimental part of it. —The devotional spirit is in some measure constitutional, depending on liveliness of imagination and sensibility of heart, and, like these qualities, prevails more in warmer climates than it does in ours. What shows its great dependence on the imagination, is the remarkable attachment it has to poetry and music, which Shakspeare calls the food of love, and which may, with equal truth, be called the food of devotion. Music enters into the future paradise of the devout of every sect and of every country. The Deity, viewed by the eye of cool reason, may be said, with great propriety, to dwell in light inaccessible. The mind, struck with the immensity of his being, and with a sense of its own littleness and unworthiness, admires with that distant awe and veneration that almost excludes love. But viewed by a devout imagination, he may become an object of the warmest affection, and even passion.—The philosopher contemplates the Deity in all those marks of wisdom and benignity diffused through the various works of nature. The devout man confines his views rather to his own particular connexion with the Deity, the many instances of his goodness he himself has experienced, and the many greater he still hopes for. This establishes a kind of intercourse, which often interests the heart and passions in the deepest manner.

The devotional taste, like all other tastes, has had the hard fate to be condemned as a weakness, by all who are strangers to its joys and its influence. Too much and too frequent occasion has been given, to turn this subject into ridicule.—A heated and devout imagination, when not under the direction of a very sound understanding, is apt to run very wild, and is at the same time very impatient to publish all its follies to the world.—The feelings of a devout heart should be mentioned with great reserve and delicacy, as they depend upon private experience, and certain circumstances of mind and situation, which the world can neither know nor judge of. But devotional writings, excuted with judgment and taste, are not only highly useful, but to all who have a true sense of religion, peculiarly engaging.

Gregory.

§ 66. *Advantages of Devotion.*

The devotional spirit, united to good sense and a cheerful temper, gives that steadiness to virtue, which it always wants when produced and supported by good natural dispositions only. It corrects and humanizes those constitutional vices, which it is not able entirely to subdue; and though it too often fails to render men perfectly virtuous, it preserves them from becoming utterly abandoned. It has, besides, the most favourable influence on all the passive virtues: it gives a softness and sensibility to the heart, and a mildness and gentleness to the manners; but above all, it produces an universal charity and love to mankind, however different in station, country, or religion. There is a sublime yet tender melancholy, almost the universal attendant on genius, which is too apt to degenerate into gloom and disgust with the world. Devotion is admirably calculated to sooth this disposition, by insensibly leading the mind, while it seems to indulge it, to those prospects which calm every murmur of discontent, and diffuse a cheerfulness over the darkest hours of human life.—Persons in the pride of high health and spirits, who are keen in the pursuits of pleasure, interest, or ambition, have either no ideas on this subject, or treat it as the enthusiasm of a weak mind. But this really shows great narrowness of understanding; a very little reflection and acquaintance with nature might teach them, on how precarious a foundation their boasted independence on religion is built; the thousand nameless accidents that may destroy it; and that though for some years they should escape these, yet that time must impair the greatest vigour of health and spirits, and deprive them of all those objects for which, at present, they think life only worth enjoying. It should seem, therefore, very necessary to secure some permanent object, some real support to the mind, to cheer the soul, when all others shall have lost their influence.—The greatest inconvenience, indeed, that attends devotion, is its taking such a fast hold of the affections, as sometimes threatens the extinguishing of every other active principle of the mind. For when the devotional spirit falls in with a melancholy temper, it is too apt to depress the mind entirely, to sink it to the weakest superstition, and to produce a total retirement and abstraction from the world, and all the duties of life. *Gregory.*

§ 67. *The Difference between true and false Politeness.*

It is evident enough, that the moral and Christian duty of preferring one another in honour, respects only social peace and charity, and terminates in the good and edification of our Christian brother. Its use is, to soften the minds of men, and to draw them from that savage rusticity, which engenders many vices, and discredits the virtues themselves. But when men had experienced the benefit of this complying temper, and further saw the ends, not of charity only, but of self-interest, that might be answered by it; they considered no longer its just purpose and application, but stretched it to that officious sedulity, and extreme servility of adulation, which we too often observe and lament in polished life.

Hence, that infinite attention and consideration, which is so rigidly exacted, and so duly paid, in the commerce of the world: hence, that prostitution of mind, which leaves a man no will, no sentiment, no principle, no character; all which disappear under the uniform exhibition of good manners: hence, those insidious arts, those studied disguises, those obsequious flatteries, nay, those multiplied and nicely-varied forms of insinuation and address, the direct aim of which may be to acquire the fame of politeness and good-breeding, but the certain effect, to corrupt every virtue, to sooth every vanity, and to inflame every vice of the human heart.

These fatal mischiefs introduce themselves under the pretence and semblance of that humanity, which the scriptures encourage and enjoin: but the genuine virtue is easily distinguished from the counterfeit, and by the following plain signs.

True politeness is modest, unpretending, and generous. It appears as little as may be; and when it does a courtesy, would willingly conceal it. It chooses silently to forego its own claims, not officiously to withdraw them. It engages a man to prefer his neighbour to himself, because he really esteems him; because he is tender of his reputation; because he thinks it more manly, more Christian, to descend a little himself than to degrade another. It respects, in a word, the credit and estimation of his neighbour.

The mimic of this amiable virtue, false politeness, is, on the other hand, ambitious, servile, timorous. It affects popularity; is solicitous to please, and to be taken notice of. The man of this character does not offer, but obtrude his civilities; because he would merit by this assiduity; because, in despair of winning regard by any worthier qualities, he would be sure to make the most of this; and lastly, because of all things, he would dread, by the omission of any punctilious observance, to give offence. In a word, this sort of politeness respects, for its immediate object, the favour and consideration of our neighbour.

2. Again: the man who governs himself by the spirit of the apostle's precept, expresses his preference of another in such a way as is worthy of himself; in all innocent compliances, in all honest civilities, in all decent and manly condescensions.

On the contrary, the man of the world, who rests in the *letter* of this command, is regardless of the means by which he conducts himself. He respects neither his own dignity, nor that of human nature. Truth, reason, virtue, all are equally betrayed by this supple impostor. He assents to the errors, though the most pernicious; he applauds the follies, though the most ridiculous, he sooths the vices, though the most flagrant, of other men. He never contradicts, though in the softest form of insinuation; he never disapproves, though by a respectful silence; he never condemns, though it be only by a good example. In short, he is solicitous for nothing, but by some studied devices to hide from others, and, if possible, to palliate to himself, the grossness of his illiberal adulation.

Lastly; we may be sure, that the *ultimate* ends for which these different objects are pursued, and by so different *means*, must also lie wide of each other.

Accordingly, the true polite man would, by all proper testimonies of respect, promote the credit and estimation of his neighbour; *because* he sees that, by this generous consideration of each other, the peace of the world is, in a good degree, preserved; *because* he knows that these mutual attentions prevent animosities, soften the fierceness of men's manners, and disposes them to all the offices of benevolence and charity; *because*, in a word, the interests of society are best served by this conduct; and *because* he understands it to be his duty to love his *neighbour*.

The falsely polite, on the contrary, are anxious, by all means whatever, to procure the favour and consideration of those they converse with; *because* they regard, ultimately, nothing more than their private interest; *because* they perceive that their own selfish designs are best carried on by such practices: in a word, *because* they *love themselves*.

Thus we see, that genuine virtue consults the honour of others by worthy means, and for the noblest purposes; the counterfeit solicits their favour by dishonest compliances, and for the basest end.

Hurd.

§ 68. *On Religious Principles and Behaviour.*

Religion is rather a matter of sentiment than reasoning. The important and interesting articles of faith are sufficiently plain. Fix your attention on these, and do not meddle with controversy. If you get into that, you plunge into a chaos, from which you will never be able to extricate yourselves. It spoils the temper, and, I suspect, has no good effect on the heart.

Avoid all books, and all conversation, that tend to shake your faith on those great points of religion, which should serve to regulate your conduct, and on which your hopes of future and eternal happiness depend.

Never indulge yourselves in ridicule on religious subjects; nor give countenance to it in others, by seeming diverted with what they say. This, to people of good breeding, will be a sufficient check.

I wish you to go no farther than the Scriptures for your religious opinions. Embrace those you find clearly revealed. Never perplex yourselves about such as you do not understand, but treat them with silent and becoming reverence.

I would advise you to read only such religious books as are addressed to the heart, such as inspire pious and devout affections, such as are proper to direct you in your conduct; and not such as tend to entangle you in the endless maze of opinions and systems.

Be punctual in the stated performance of your private devotions, morning and evening. If you have any sensibility or imagination, this will establish such an intercourse between you and the Supreme Being, as will be of infinite consequence to you in life. It will communicate an habitual cheerfulness to your temper, give a firmness and steadiness to your virtue, and enable you to go through all the vicissitudes of human life with propriety and dignity.

I wish you to be regular in your attendance on public worship, and in receiving the communion. Allow nothing to interrupt your public or private devotions, except the performance of some active duty in life, to which they should always give place. —In your behaviour at public worship, observe an exemplary attention and gravity.

That extreme strictness which I recommend to you in these duties, will be considered by many of your acquaintance as a superstitious attachment to forms; but in the advices I give you on this and other subjects, I have an eye to the spirit and manners of the age. There is a levity and dissipation in the present manners, a coldness and listlessness in whatever relates to religion, which cannot fail to infect you, unless you purposely cultivate in your minds a contrary bias, and make the devotional one habitual.

Gregory's Advice.

§ 69. *On the Beauties of the Psalms.*

Greatness confers no exemption from the cares and sorrows of life: its share of them frequently bears a melancholy proportion to its exaltation. This the Israelitish monarch experienced. He sought in piety, that peace which he could not find in empire, and alleviated the disquietudes of state, with the exercises of devotion. His invaluable Psalms convey those comforts to others, which they afforded to himself. Composed upon particular occasions, yet designed for general use; delivered out as services for Israelites under the Law, yet no less adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the Gospel; they present religion to us in the most engaging dress; communicating truths which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal; while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of redemption. Calculated alike to profit and to please, they inform the understanding, elevate the affections, and entertain the imagination. Indited under the influence of Him, to whom all hearts are known, and all events foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conformed itself to every palate. The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands, and lose their fragrancy; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest, will relish them best.—And now, could the author flatter himself that any one would take half the pleasure in reading his work which he hath taken in writing it, he would not fear the loss of his labour. The employment detached him from the bustle and hurry of life, the din of politics, and the noise of folly; vanity and vexation flew away for a season, care and disquietude came not near his dwelling. He rose, fresh as the morning, to his task; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it; and he can truly say, that food and rest were not preferred before it. Every Psalm improved infinitely upon his acquaintance with it, and no one gave him uneasiness but the last; for then he grieved that his work was done. Happier hours than those which have been spent in these meditations on the songs of Sion, he never expects to see in this world. Very pleasantly did they pass, and moved smoothly and swiftly along; for when thus engaged, he counted no time. They are gone, but have left a relish and a fragrance upon the mind, and the remembrance of them is sweet. *Horne.*

§ 70. *The Temple of virtuous Love.*

The structure on the right hand was (as I afterwards found) consecrated to virtuous Love, and could not be entered, but by such as received a ring, or some other token, from a person who was placed as a guard at the gate of it. He wore a garland of roses and myrtles on his head, and on his shoulders a robe like an imperial mantle white and unspotted all over, excepting only, that where it was clasped at his breast, there were two golden turtle doves that buttoned it by their bills, which were wrought in rubies: he was called by the name of Hymen, and was seated near the entrance of the temple, in a delicious bower, made up of several trees that were embraced by woodbines, jessamines, and amaranths, which were as so many emblems of marriage, and ornaments to the trunks that supported them. As I was single and unaccompanied, I was not permitted to enter the temple, and for that reason am a stranger to all the mysteries that were performed in it. I had, however, the curiosity to observe, how the several couples that entered were disposed of; which was after the following manner: there were two great gates on the back-side of the edifice, at which the whole crowd was let out. At one of these gates were two women, extremely beautiful, though in a different kind; the one having a very careful and composed air, the other a sort of smile and ineffable sweetness in her countenance: the name of the first was Discretion, and of the other Complacency. All who came out of this gate, and put themselves under the direction of these two sisters, were immediately conducted by them into gardens, groves, and meadows, which abounded in delights, and were furnished with every thing that could make them the proper seats of happiness. The second gate of this temple let out all the couples that were unhappily married; who came out linked together by chains, which each of them strove to break, but could not. Several of these were such as had never been acquainted with each other before they met in the great walk, or had been too well acquainted in the thicket. The entrance to this gate was possessed by three sisters, who joined themselves with these wretches, and occasioned most of their miseries. The youngest of the sisters was known by the name of Levity; who, with the innocence of a virgin, had the dress and behaviour of a harlot: the name of the second was Contention, who bore on her right arm a muff made of the skin of a porcupine, and on her left carried a little lap-dog, that barked and snapped at every one that passed by her. The eldest of the sisters, who seemed to have a haughty and imperious air, was always accompanied with a tawny Cupid, who generally marched before her with a little mace on his shoulder, the end of which was fashioned into the horns of a stag: her garments were yellow, and her complexion pale: her eyes were piercing, but had odd casts in them, and that particular distemper which makes persons who are troubled with it see objects double. Upon inquiry, I was informed that her name was Jealousy. *Tatler.*

§ 71. *The Temple of Lust.*

Having finished my observations upon this temple, and its votaries, I repaired to that which stood on the left hand, and was called the temple of Lust. The front of it was raised on Corinthian pillars, with all the meretricious ornaments that accompany that order; whereas that of the other was composed of the chaste and matron-like Ionic. The sides of it were adorned with several grotesque figures of goats, sparrows, heathen gods, satyrs, and monsters, made up of half men and half beast. The gates were unguarded, and open to all that had a mind to enter. Upon my going in, I found the windows were blinded, and let in only a kind of twilight, that served to discover a prodigious number of dark corners and apartments, into which the whole temple was divided. I was here stunned with a mixed noise of clamour and jollity: on one side of me I heard singing and dancing; on the other, brawls and clashing of swords: in short, I was so little pleased with the place, that I was going out of it: but found I could not return by the gate where I entered, which was barred against all that were come in, with bolts of iron and locks of adamant; there was no going back from this temple through the paths of pleasure which led to it: all who passed through the ceremonies of the place, went out at an iron wicket, which was kept by a dreadful giant called Remorse, that held a scourge of scorpions in his hand, and drove them into the only outlet from that temple. This was a passage so rugged, so uneven, and choked with so many thorns and briars, that it was a melancholy spectacle to behold the pains and difficulties which both sexes suffered who walked through it: the men, though in the prime of their youth, appeared weak and enfeebled with old age: the women wrung their hands, and tore their hair, and several lost their limbs, before they could extricate themselves out of the perplexities of the path in which they were engaged.—The remaining part of this vision, and the adventures I met with in the two great roads of Ambition and Avarice must be the subject of another paper.

Tatler.

§ 72. *The Temple of Virtue.*

With much labour and difficulty I passed through the first part of my vision, and recovered the centre of the wood, from whence I had the prospect of the three great roads. I here joined myself to the middle-aged party of mankind, who marched behind the standard of ambition. The great road lay in a direct line, and was terminated by the temple of Virtue. It was planted on each side with laurels, which were intermixed with marble trophies, carved pillars, and statues of lawgivers, heroes, statesmen, philosophers, and poets. The persons who travelled up this great path, were such whose thoughts were bent upon doing eminent services to mankind, or promoting the good of their country. On each side of this great road, were several paths that were also laid out in straight lines, and ran parallel with it; these were most of them covered walks, and received into them men of retired virtue, who proposed to themselves the same end of their journey, though they chose to make it in shade and obscurity. The edifices, at the extremity of the walk, were so contrived, that we could not see the temple of Honour, by reason of the temple of Virtue, which stood before it: at the gates of this temple, we were met by the goddess of it, who conducted us into that of Honour, which was joined to the other edifice by a beautiful triumphal arch, and had no other entrance into it. When the deity of the inner structure had received us, she presented us in a body, to a figure that was placed over the high altar, and was the emblem of Eternity. She sat on a globe, in the midst of a golden zodiac, holding the figure of a sun in one hand, and a moon in the other: her head was veiled, and her feet covered. Our hearts glowed within us, as we stood amidst the sphere of light which this image cast on every side of it.

Ibid.

§ 73. *The Temple of Vanity.*

Having seen all that happened to this band of adventurers, I repaired to another pile of buildings that stood within view of the temple of Honour, and was raised in imitation of it, upon the very same model; but, at my approach to it, I found that the stones were laid together without mortar, and that the whole fabric stood upon so weak a foundation, that it shook with every wind that blew. This was called the Temple of Vanity. The goddess of it sat in the midst of a great many tapers, that burned day and night, and made her appear much better than she would have done in open day-light. Her whole art was to show herself more beautiful and majestic than she really was. For which reason she had painted her face, and wore a cluster of false jewels upon her breast: but what I more particularly observed, was the breadth of her petticoat, which was made altogether in the fashion of a modern fardingal. This place was filled with hypocrites, pedants, free-thinkers, and prating politicians, with a rabble of those who have only titles to make them great men. Female votaries crowded the temple, choked up the avenues of it, and were more in number than the sand upon the sea-shore. I made it my business, in my return towards that part of the wood from whence I first set out, to observe the walks which led to this temple; for I met in it several who had begun their journey with the band of virtuous persons, and travelled some time in their company: but, upon examination, I found that there were several paths, which led out of the great road into the sides of the wood, and ran into so many crooked turns and windings, that those who travelled through them, often turned their backs upon the temple of Virtue, then crossed the straight road, and sometimes marched in it for a little space, till the crooked path which they were engaged in again led them into the wood. The several alleys of these wanderers, had their particular ornaments: one of them I could not but take notice of, in the walk of the mischievous pretenders to politics, which had at every turn the figure of a person, whom, by the inscription, I found to be Machiavel, pointing out the way, with an extended finger, like a Mercury.

Tatler.

§ 74. *The Temple of Avarice.*

I was now returned in the same manner as before, with a design to observe carefully every thing that passed in the region of Avarice, and the occurrences in that assembly, which was made up of persons of my own age. This body of travellers had not gone far in the third great road, before it led them insensibly into a deep valley, in which they journeyed several days with great toil and uneasiness, and without the necessary refreshments of food and sleep. The only relief they met with, was in a river that ran through the bottom of the valley on a bed of golden sand: they often drank of this stream, which had such a particular quality in it, that though it refreshed them for a time, it rather inflamed than quenched their thirst. On each side of the river was a range of hills full of precious ore; for where the rains had washed off the earth, one might see in several parts of them long veins of gold, and rocks that looked like pure silver. We were told that the deity of the place had forbad any of his votaries to dig into the bowels of these hills, or convert the treasures they contained to any use, under pain of starving. At the end of the valley stood the temple of Avarice, made after the manner of a fortification, and surrounded with a thousand triple-headed dogs, that were placed there to keep off beggars. At our approach they all fell a barking, and would have much terrified us, had not an old woman, who had called herself by the forged name of Competency, offered herself for our guide. She carried under her garment a golden bow, which she no sooner held up in her hand, but the dogs lay down, and the gates flew open for our reception. We were led through an hundred iron doors before we entered the temple. At the upper end of it, sat the god of Avarice, with a long filthy beard, and a meager starved countenance, enclosed with heaps of ingots and pyramids of money, but half naked and shivering with cold: on his right hand was a fiend called Rapine, and on his left a particular favourite, to whom he had given the title of Parsimony; the first was his collector, and the other his cashier. There were several long tables placed on each side of the temple, with respective officers attending behind them: some of these I inquired into: at the first table was kept the office of Corruption. Seeing a solicitor extremely busy, and whispering every body that passed by, I kept my eye upon him very attentively, and saw him often going up to a person that had a pen in his hand, with a multiplication-table and an almanack before him, which, as I afterwards heard, was all the learning he was master of. The solicitor would often apply himself to his ear, and at the same time convey money into his hand, for which the other would give him out a piece of paper, or parchment, signed and sealed in form. The name of this dexterous and successful solicitor was Bribery.—At the next table was the office of Extortion: behind it sat a person in a bob-wig, counting over a great sum of money: he gave out little purses to several, who, after a short tour, brought him, in return, sacks full of the same kind of coin. I saw, at the same time, a person called Fraud, who sat behind the counter, with false scales, light weights, and scanty measures; by the skilful application of which instruments, she had got together an immense heap of wealth; it would be endless to name the several officers, or describe the votaries that attended in this temple; there were many old men, panting and breathless, reposing their heads on bags of money; nay, many of them actually dying, whose very pangs and convulsions (which rendered their purses useless to them) only made them grasp them the faster. There were some tearing with one hand all things, even to the garments and flesh of many miserable persons who stood before them; and with the other hand throwing away what they had seized, to harlots, flatterers, and panders, that stood behind them. On a sudden the whole assembly fell a trembling; and, upon inquiry, I found that the great room we were in was haunted with a spectre, that many times a day appeared to them, and terrified them to distraction. In the midst of their terror and amazement, the apparition entered, which I immediately knew to be Poverty. Whether it were by my acquaintance with this phantom, which had rendered the sight of her more familiar to me, or however it was, she did not make so indigent or frightful a figure in my eye, as the god of this loathsome temple. The miserable votaries of this place were, I found, of another mind: every one fancied himself threatened by the apparition as she stalked about the room, and began to lock their coffers, and tie their bags, with the utmost fear and trembling. I must confess, I look upon the passion which I saw in this unhappy people, to be of the same nature with those unaccountable antipathies which some persons are born with, or rather as a kind of frenzy, not unlike that which throws a man into terrors and agonies at the sight of so useful and innocent a thing as water. The whole assembly was surprised, when, instead of paying my devotions to the deity whom they all adored, they saw me address myself to the phantom. "Oh! Poverty! (said I) my first petition to thee is, that thou wouldest never appear to me hereafter; but if thou wilt not grant me this, that thou wouldest not bear a form more terrible than that in which thou appearest to me at present. Let not thy threats or menaces betray me to any thing that is ungrateful or unjust. Let me not shut my ears to the cries of the needy. Let me not forget the person that has deserved well of me. Let me not, from any fear of Thee, desert my friend, my principles, or my honour. If Wealth is to visit me, and come with her usual attendants, Vanity and Avarice, do thou, O Poverty! hasten to my rescue; but bring along with Thee thy two sisters, in whose company thou art always cheerful, Liberty and Innocence."

Tatler.

§ 75. *The Virtue of Gentleness not to be confounded with artificial and insincere Politeness.*

Gentleness corrects whatever is offensive in our manners; and, by a constant train of humane attentions, studies to alleviate the burden of common misery. Its office, therefore, is extensive. It is not, like some other virtues, called forth only on peculiar emergencies: but it is continually in action, when we are engaged in intercourse with men. It ought to form our address, to regulate our speech, and to diffuse itself over our whole behaviour.

I must warn you, however, not to confound this gentle wisdom which is from above, with that artificial courtesy, that studied smoothness of manners, which is learned in the school of the world. Such accomplishments the most frivolous and empty may possess. Too often they are employed by the artful, as a snare; too often affected by the hard and unfeeling, as a cover to the baseness of their minds. We cannot, at the same time, avoid observing the homage which, even in such instances, the world is constrained to pay to virtue. In order to render society agreeable, it is found necessary to assume somewhat that may at least carry its appearance; Virtue is the universal charm; even its shadow is courted, when the substance is wanting: the imitation of its form has been reduced into an art; and, in the commerce of life, the first study of all who would either gain the esteem, or win the hearts of others, is to learn the speech, and to adopt the manners of candour, gentleness, and humanity; but that gentleness which is the characteristic of a good man, has, like every other virtue, its seat in the heart; and, let me add, nothing except what flows from it, can render even external manners truly pleasing; for no assumed behaviour can at all times hide the real character. In that unaffected civility which springs from a gentle mind, there is a charm infinitely more powerful than in all the studied manners of the most finished courtier.

Blair.

§ 76. *Opportunities for great Acts of Beneficence rare, for Gentleness continual.*

But, perhaps, it will be pleaded by some, that this gentleness on which we now insist, regards only those smaller offices of life, which, in their eyes, are not essential to religion and goodness. Negligent, they confess, on slight occasions, of the government of their temper, or the regulation of their behaviour, they are attentive, as they pretend, to the great duties of beneficence; and ready, whenever the opportunity presents, to perform important services to their fellow-creatures. But let such persons reflect, that the occasions of performing those important good deeds very rarely occur. Perhaps their situation in life, or the nature of their connexions, may, in a great measure, exclude them from such opportunities. Great events give scope for great virtues; but the main tenor of human life is composed of small occurrences. Within the round of these, lie the materials of the happiness of most men; the subjects of their duty, and the trials of their virtue. Virtue must be formed and supported, not by unfrequent acts, but by daily and repeated exertions. In order to its becoming either vigorous or useful, it must be habitually active; not breaking forth occasionally with a transient lustre, like the blaze of the comet; but regular in its returns, like the light of day; not like the aromatic gale, which sometimes feasts the sense; but, like the ordinary breeze, which purifies the air, and renders it healthful.

Years may pass over our heads, without affording any opportunity for acts of high beneficence, or extensive utility. Whereas, not a day passes, but in the common transactions of life, and especially in the intercourse of domestic society, gentleness finds place for promoting the happiness of others, and for strengthening in ourselves, the habit of virtue. Nay, by seasonable discoveries of a humane spirit, we sometimes contribute more materially to the advancement of happiness, than by actions which are seemingly more important. There are situations, not a few, in human life, where the encouraging reception, the condescending behaviour, and the look of sympathy, bring greater relief to the heart, than the most bountiful gift: while, on the other side, when the hand of liberality is extended to bestow, the want of gentleness is sufficient to frustrate the intention of the benefit; we sour those whom we meant to oblige; and, by conferring favours with ostentation and harshness, we convert them into injuries. Can any disposition, then, be held to possess a low place in the scale of virtue, whose influence is so considerable on the happiness of the world.

Gentleness is, in truth, the great avenue to mutual enjoyment. Amidst the strife of interfering interests, it tempers the violence of contention, and keeps alive the seeds of harmony. It softens animosities, renews endearments, and renders the countenance of man, a refreshment to man. Banish gentleness from the earth; suppose the world to be filled with none but harsh and contentious spirits, and what sort of society would remain? the solitude of the desert were preferable to it. The conflict of jarring elements in chaos; the cave, where subterraneous winds contend and roar; the den, where serpents hiss, and beasts of the forest howl; would be the only proper representations of such assemblies of men.—Strange! that where men have all one common interest, they should so often absurdly concur in defeating it! Has not nature already provided a sufficient quantity of unavoidable evils for the state of man? As if we did not suffer enough from the storm which beats upon us without, must we conspire also, in those societies where we assemble, in order to find a retreat from that storm, to harass one another?

Blair.

§ 77. *Gentleness recommended on Considerations of our own Interest.*

But if the sense of duty, and of

common happiness, be insufficient to recommend the virtue of gentleness, then let me desire you to consider your own interest. Whatever ends a good man can be supposed to pursue, gentleness will be found to favour them; it prepossesses and wins every heart; it persuades, when every other argument fails; often disarms the fierce, and melts the stubborn. Whereas, harshness confirms the opposition it would subdue; and, of an indifferent person, creates an enemy. He who could overlook an injury committed in the collision of interests, will long and severely resent the slights of a contemptuous behaviour. To the man of gentleness, the world is generally disposed to ascribe every other good quality. The higher endowments of the mind we admire at a distance, and when any impropriety of behaviour accompanies them, we admire without love: they are like some of the distant stars, whose beneficial influence reaches not to us. Whereas, of the influence of gentleness, all in some degree partake, and therefore all love it. The man of this character rises in the world without struggle, and flourishes without envy. His misfortunes are universally lamented; and his failings are easily forgiven.

But whatever may be the effect of this virtue on our external condition, its influence on our internal enjoyment is certain and powerful. That inward tranquillity which it promotes, is the first requisite to every pleasurable feeling. It is the calm and clear atmosphere, the serenity and sunshine of the mind. When benignity and gentleness reign within, we are always least in hazard of being ruffled from without; every person, and every occurrence, are beheld in the most favourable light. But let some clouds of disgust and ill-humour gather on the mind, and immediately the scene changes: Nature seems transformed; and the appearance of all things is blackened to our view. The gentle mind is like the smooth stream, which reflects every object in its just proportion, and in its fairest colours. The violent spirit, like troubled waters, renders back the images of things distorted and broken; and communicates to them all that disordered motion which arises solely from its own agitation. *Blair.*

§ 78. *The Man of gentle Manners is superior to frivolous Offences and slight Provocations.*

As soon may the waves of the sea cease to roll, as provocations to arise from human corruption and frailty. Attacked by great injuries, the man of mild and gentle spirit will feel what human nature feels; and will defend and resent, as his duty allows him. But to those slight provocations, and frivolous offences, which are the most frequent causes of disquiet, he is happily superior. Hence his days flow in a far more placid tenor than those of others; exempted from the numberless discomposures which agitate vulgar minds, inspired with higher sentiments; taught to regard, with indulgent eye, the frailties of men, the omissions of the careless, the follies of the imprudent, and the levity of the fickle, he retreats into the calmness of his spirit, as into an undisturbed sanctuary: and quietly allows the usual current of life to hold its course. *Ibid.*

§ 79. *Pride fills the World with Harshness and Severity.*

Let me advise you to view your character with an impartial eye; and to learn from your own failings, to give that indulgence which in your turn you claim. It is pride which fills the world with so much harshness and severity. In the fulness of self-estimation, we forget what we are, we claim attentions to which we are not entitled. We are rigorous to offences, as if we had never offended; unfeeling to distress, as if we knew not what it was to suffer. From those airy regions of pride and folly, let us descend to our proper level. Let us survey the natural equality on which Providence has placed man with man, and reflect on the infirmities common to all. If the reflection on natural equality and mutual offences be insufficient to prompt humanity, let us at least consider what we are in the sight of God. Have we none of that forbearance to give one another, which we all so earnestly entreat from Heaven? Can we look for clemency or gentleness from our Judge, when we are so backward to show it to our own brethren?

Blair.

§ 80. *Violence and Contention often caused by Trifles and imaginary Mischiefs.*

Accustom yourselves, also, to reflect on the small moment of those things which are the usual incentives to violence and contention. In the ruffled and angry hour, we view every appearance through a false medium. The most inconsiderable point of interest or honour swells into a momentous object; and the slightest attack seems to threaten immediate ruin. But after passion or pride has subsided, we look round in vain for the mighty mischiefs we dreaded: the fabric, which our disturbed imagination had reared, totally disappears. But though the cause of contention has dwindled away, its consequences remain. We have alienated a friend; we have imbittered an enemy; we have sown the seeds of future suspicion, malevolence, or disgust.—Suspend your violence, I beseech you, for a moment, when causes of discord occur. Anticipate that period of coolness, which, of itself, will soon arrive. Allow yourselves to think, how little you have any prospect of gaining by fierce contention; but how much of the true happiness of life you are certain of throwing away. Easily, and from the smallest chink, the bitter waters of strife are let forth; but their course cannot be foreseen; and he seldom fails of suffering most from the poisonous effect, who first allowed them to flow.

Ibid.

§ 81. *Gentleness best promoted by religious Views.*

But gentleness will, most of all, be promoted by frequent views of those great objects which our holy religion presents. Let the prospects of immortality fill your minds. Look upon this world as a state of passage. Consider yourselves as engaged in the pursuit of higher interests; as acting now, under the eye of God, an introductory part to a more important scene. Elevated by such sentiments, your minds will become calm and sedate. You will look down, as from a superior station, on the petty disturbances of the world. They are the selfish, the sensual, and the vain, who are most subject to the impotence of passion. They are linked so closely to the world; by so many sides they touch every object, and every person around them, that they are perpetually hurt, and perpetually hurting others. But the spirit of true religion removes us to a proper distance from the grating objects of worldly contentions. It leaves us sufficiently connected with the world, for acting our part in it with propriety; but disengages us from it so far, as to weaken its power of disturbing our tranquillity. It inspires magnanimity; and magnanimity always breathes gentleness. It leads us to view the follies of men with pity, not with rancour; and to treat, with the mildness of a superior nature, what in little minds would call forth all the bitterness of passion.

Ibid.

§ 82. *Gentleness to be assumed, as the Ornament of every Age and Station; but to be distinguished from polished or affected manners.*

Aided by such considerations, let us cultivate that gentle wisdom which is, in so many respects, important both to our duty and our happiness. Let us assume it as the ornament of every age, and of every station. Let it temper the petulance of youth, and soften the moroseness of old age. Let it mitigate authority in those who rule, and promote deference among those who obey. I conclude with repeating the caution, not to mistake for true gentleness, that flimsy imitation of it, called polished manners, which often, among the men of the world, under a smooth appearance, conceals much asperity. Let yours be native gentleness of heart, flowing from the love of God, and the love of man. Unite this amiable spirit, with a proper zeal for all that is right, and just, and true. Let piety be combined in your character with humanity. Let determined integrity dwell in a mild and gentle breast. A character thus supported, will command more real respect than can be procured by the most shining accomplishments, when separated from virtue. *Blair.*

§ 83. *Enthusiasm less pernicious to the Mind, than Coldness and Indifference in Religion.*

But whatever absurdities may arise from the fancied ardours of enthusiasm, they are much less pernicious than the contrary extreme of coldness and indifference in religion. The spirit of chivalry, though it led to many romantic enterprises, was nevertheless favourable to true courage, as it excited and nourished magnanimity and contempt of danger; which, though sometimes wasted in absurd undertakings, were of the greatest use on real and proper occasions. The noblest energies of which we are capable, can scarcely be called out without some degree of enthusiasm, in whatever cause we are engaged; and those sentiments which tend to the exaltation of human nature, though they may often excite attempts beyond the human powers, will, however, prevent our stopping short of them, and losing, by careless indolence and self-desertion, the greatest part of that strength with which we really are endued.

How common is it for those who profess (and perhaps sincerely) to believe with entire persuasion the truth of the gospel, to declare that they do not pretend to frame their lives according to the purity of its moral precepts! "I hope," say they, "I am guilty of no great crimes: but the customs of the world in these times will not admit of a conduct agreeable either to reason or revelation. I know the course of life I am in is wrong; I know that I am engrossed by the world—that I have no time for reflection, nor for the practice of many duties which I acknowledge to be such. But I know not how it is—I do not find that I can alter my way of living."—Thus they coolly and contentedly give themselves up to a constant course of dissipation, and a general worthlessness of character, which, I fear, is as little favourable to their happiness here or hereafter, as the occasional commission of crimes at which they would start and tremble. The habitual neglect of all that is most valuable and important, of children, friends, servants—of neighbours and dependants—of the poor—of God—and of their own minds, they consider as an excusable levity, and satisfy themselves with laying the blame on the manners of the times.

If a modern lady of fashion was to be called to account for the disposition of her time, I imagine her defence would run in this style:—"I can't, you know, be out of the world, nor act differently from every body in it. The hours are every where late—consequently I rise late. I have scarce breakfasted before morning visits begin, or 'tis time to go to an auction, or a concert, or to take alittle exercise for my health. Dressing my hair is a long operation, but one can't appear with a head unlike every body else. One must sometimes go to a play, or an opera; though I own it hurries one to death. Then what with necessary visits—the perpetual engagements to card-parties at private houses—and attendance on public assemblies, to which all people of fashion subscribe, the evenings, you see, are fully disposed of. What time then can I possibly have for what you call domestic duties?—You talk of the offices and enjoyments of friendship—alas! I have no hours left for friends! I must see them in a crowd, or not at all. As to cultivating the friendship of my husband, we are very civil when we meet: but we are both too much engaged to spend much time with each other. With regard to my daughters, I have given them a French governess, and proper masters—I can do no more for them. You tell me, I should instruct my servants—but I have not time to inform myself, much less can I undertake any thing of that sort for them, or even be able to guess what they do with themselves the greatest part of the twenty-four hours. I go to church, if possible, once on a Sunday, and then some of my servants attend me; and if they will not mind what the preacher says, how can I help it?—The management of our fortune, as far as I am concerned, I must leave to the steward and housekeeper; for I find I can barely snatch a quarter of an hour just to look over the bill of fare when I am to have company, that they may not send up any thing frightful or old-fashioned—As to the christian duty of charity, I assure you I am not ill natured; and (considering that the great expense of being always dressed for company, with losses at cards, subscriptions, and public spectacles, leave me very little to dispose of) I am ready enough to give my money when I meet with a miserable object. You say I should inquire out such, inform myself thoroughly of their cases, make an acquaintance with the poor of my neighbourhood in the country, and plan out the best methods of relieving the unfortunate and assisting the industrious. But this supposes much more time, and much more money, than I have to bestow.—I have had hopes indeed that my summers would have afforded me more leisure; but we stay pretty late in town; then we generally pass several weeks at one or other of the water-drinking places, where every moment is spent in public; and, for the few months in which we reside at our own seat, our house is always full, with a succession of company, to whose amusement one is obliged to dedicate every hour of the day."

So here ends the account of that time which was given you to prepare and educate yourself for eternity!—Yet you believe the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments. Ask your own heart what reward you deserve, or what kind of felicity you are fitted to enjoy?—Which of those faculties or affections, which heaven can be supposed to gratify, have you cultivated and improved?——If, in that eternal world, the stores of knowledge should be laid open before you, have you preserved that thirst of knowledge, or that taste for truth, which is now to be indulged with endless information?—If, in the society of saints and angels, the purest benevolence and most cordial love is to constitute your happiness, where is the heart which should enjoy this delightful intercourse of affection?—Has yours been exercised and refined to a proper capacity of it during your state of discipline, by the energies of generous friendship, by the meltings of parental fondness, or by that union of heart and soul, that mixed exertion of perfect friendship and ineffable tenderness, which approaches nearest to the full satisfaction of our nature, in the bands of conjugal love?—Alas! you scarce knew you had a heart, except when you felt it swell with pride, or flutter with vanity!—Has your piety and gratitude to the Source of all Good, been exercised and strengthened by constant acts of praise and thanksgiving?—Was it nourished by frequent meditation, and silent recollection of all the wonders he hath done for us, till it burst forth in fervent prayer?—I fear it was rather decency than devotion, that carried you once a week to the place of public worship—and for the rest of the week, your thoughts and time were so very differently filled up, that the idea of a Ruler of the universe could occur but seldom, and then, rather as an object of terror, than of hope and joy. How then shall a soul so dead to divine love, so lost to all but the most childish pursuits, be able to exalt and enlarge itself to a capacity of that bliss which we are allowed to hope for, in a more intimate perception of the divine presence, in contemplating more nearly the perfections of our Creator, and in pouring out before his throne our ardent gratitude, love, and adoration?—What kind of training is the life you have passed through, for such an immortality?

And dare you look down with contempt on those whom strong temptation from natural passions, or a train of unfortunate circumstances, have sunk into the commission of what you call great crimes?—Dare you speak peace to your own heart, because by different circumstances you have been preserved from them?—Far be it from me to wish to lessen the horror of crimes; but yet, as the temptations to these occur but seldom, whereas the temptations to neglect, and indifference towards our duty, for ever surround us, it may be necessary to awaken ourselves to some calculation of the proportions between such habitual omission of all that is good, and the commission of more heinous acts of sin; between wasting our own life in what is falsely called innocent amusement, and disgracing it by faults which would alarm society more, though possibly they might injure it less.

Mrs. Chapone.

§ 84. *Of the Difference between the Extreme of Negligence and Rigour in Religion.*

How amazing is the distance between the extreme of negligence and self-indulgence in such nominal Christians, and the opposite excess of rigour which some have unhappily thought meritorious! between a Pascal (who dreaded the influence of pleasure so much, as to wear an iron, which he pressed into his side whenever he found himself taking delight in any object of sense) and those who think life lent them only to be squandered in senseless diversions, and the frivolous indulgence of vanity!—what a strange composition is man! ever diverging from the right line—forgetting the true end of his being—or widely mistaking the means that lead to it.

If it were indeed true that the Supreme Being had made it the condition of our future happiness, that we should spend the days of our pilgrimage here on earth in voluntary suffering and mortification, and a continual opposition to every inclination of nature, it would surely be worth while to conform even to these conditions, however rigorous: and we see, by numerous examples, that it is not more than human creatures are capable of, when fully persuaded that their eternal interests demand it. But if, in fact, the laws of God are no other than directions for the better enjoyment of our existence—if he has forbidden us nothing that is not pernicious, and commanded nothing that is not highly advantageous to us—if, like a beneficent parent, he inflicts neither punishment nor constraint unnecessarily, but makes our good the end of all his injunctions—it will then appear much more extraordinary that we should perversely go on in constant and acknowledged neglect of those injunctions.

Is there a single pleasure worthy of a rational being, which is not, within certain limitations, consistent with religion and virtue?—And are not the limits, within which we are permitted to enjoy them, the same which are prescribed by reason and nature, and which we cannot exceed without manifest hurt to ourselves, or others?—It is not the life of a hermit that is enjoined us: it is only the life of a rational being, formed for society, capable of continual improvement, and consequently of continual advancement in happiness.

Sir Charles and Lady Worthy are neither gloomy ascetics, nor frantic enthusiasts; they married from affection, on long acquaintance, and perfect esteem; they therefore enjoy the best pleasures of the heart in the highest degree. They concur in a rational scheme of life, which, whilst it makes them always cheerful and happy, renders them the friends of human kind, and the blessing of all around them. They do not desert their station in the world, nor deny themselves the proper and moderate use of their large fortune; though that portion of it, which is appropriated to the use of others, is that from which they derive their highest gratifications. They spend four or five months of every year in London, where they keep up an intercourse of hospitality and civility with many of the most respectable persons of their own, or of higher rank; but have endeavoured rather at a select than a numerous acquaintance; and as they never play at cards, this endeavour has the more easily succeeded. Three days in the week, from the hour of dinner, are given up to this intercourse with what may be called the world. Three more are spent in a family way, with a few intimate friends, whose tastes are conformable to their own, and with whom the book and working-table, or sometimes music, supply the intervals of useful and agreeable conversation. In these parties their children are always present, and partake of the improvement that arises from such society, or from the well-chosen pieces which are read aloud. The seventh day is always spent at home, after the due attendance on public worship; and is peculiarly appropriated to the religious instruction of their children and servants, or to other works of charity. As they keep regular hours, and rise early, and as Lady Worthy never pays or admits morning visits, they have seven or eight hours in every day, free from all interruption from the world, in which the cultivation of their own minds, and those of their children, the due attention to health, to economy, and to the poor, are carried on in the most regular manner.

Thus, even in London, they contrive, without the appearance of quarrelling with the world, or of shutting themselves up from it, to pass the greatest part of their time in a reasonable and useful, as well as an agreeable manner. The rest of the year they spend at their family seat in the country, where the happy effects of their example, and of their assiduous attention to the good of all around them, are still more observable than in town. Their neighbours, their tenants, and the poor, for many miles about them, find in them a sure resource and comfort in calamity, and a ready assistance to every scheme of honest industry. The young are instructed at their expense, and under their direction, and rendered useful at the earliest period possible; the aged and the sick have every comfort administered that their state requires; the idle and dissolute are kept in awe by vigilant inspection; the quarrelsome are brought, by a sense of their own interest, to live more quietly with their family and neighbours, and amicably to refer their disputes to Sir Charles's decision.

This amiable pair are not less highly prized by the genteel families of their neighbourhood, who are sure of finding in their house the most polite and cheerful hospitality, and in them a fund of good sense and good humour, with a constant disposition to promote every innocent pleasure. They are particularly the delight of all the young people, who consider them as their patrons and their oracles, to whom they always apply for advice and assistance in any kind of distress, or in any scheme of amusement.

Sir Charles and Lady Worthy are seldom without some friends in the house with them during their stay in the country; but, as their methods are known, they are never broken in upon by their guests, who do not expect to see them till dinner-time, except at the hour of prayer and of breakfast. In their private walks or rides, they usually visit the cottages of the labouring poor, with all of whom they are personally acquainted; and by the sweetness and friendliness of their manner, as well as by their beneficent actions, they so entirely possess the hearts of these people, that they are made the confidants of all their family grievances, and the casuists to settle all their scruples of conscience or difficulties in conduct. By this method of conversing freely with them, they find out their different characters and capacities, and often discover and apply to their own benefit, as well as that of the person they distinguish, talents which would otherwise have been for ever lost to the public.

From this slight sketch of their manner of living, can it be thought that the practice of virtue costs them any great sacrifices? Do they appear to be the servants of a hard master?—It is true, they have not the amusement of gaming, nor do they curse themselves in bitterness of soul, for losing the fortune Providence had bestowed upon them: they are not continually in public places, nor stifled in crowded assemblies; nor are their hours consumed in an insipid interchange of unmeaning chat with hundreds of fine people who are perfectly indifferent to them; but then, in return, the Being whom they serve indulges them in the best pleasures of love, of friendship, of parental and family affection, of divine beneficence, and a piety, which chiefly consists in joyful acts of love and praise!—not to mention the delights they derive from a taste uncorrupted and still alive to natural pleasures; from the beauties of nature, and from cultivating those beauties joined with utility in the scenes around them; and above all, from that flow of spirits, which a life of activity, and the constant exertion of right affections, naturally produce. Compare their countenances with those of the wretched slaves of the world, who are hourly complaining of fatigue, of listlessness, distaste, and vapours; and who, with faded cheeks and worn-out constitutions, still continue to haunt the scenes where once their vanity found gratification, but where they now meet only with mortification and disgust; then tell me, which has chosen the happier plan, admitting for a moment that no future penalty was annexed to a wrong choice? Listen to the character that is given of Sir Charles Worthy and his lady, wherever they are named, and then tell me, whether even your idol, the world, is not more favourable to them than to you.

Perhaps it is vain to think of recalling those whom long habits, and the established tyranny of pride and vanity, have almost precluded from a possibility of imitating such patterns, and in whom the very desire of amendment is extinguished; but for those who are now entering on the stage of life, and who have their parts to choose, how earnestly could I wish for the spirit of persuasion—for such a "warning voice" as should make itself heard amidst all the gay bustle that surrounds them! it should cry to them without ceasing, not to be led away by the crowd of fools, without knowing whither they are going—not to exchange real happiness for the empty name of pleasure—not to prefer fashion to immortality—and, not to fancy it possible for them to be innocent, and at the same time useless. *Mrs. Chapone.*

§ 85. *On Gratitude.*

There is not a more pleasing exercise of the mind than gratitude.

It is accompanied with such inward satisfaction, that the duty is sufficiently rewarded by the performance. It is not like the practice of many other virtues, difficult and painful, but attended with so much pleasure, that were there no positive command which enjoined it, nor any recompense laid up for it hereafter—a generous mind would indulge in it, for the natural gratification that accompanies it.

If gratitude is due from man to man—how much more from man to his Maker?—The Supreme Being does not only confer upon us those bounties which proceed more immediately from his hand, but even those benefits which are conveyed to us by others. Every blessing we enjoy, by what means soever it may be derived upon us, is the gift of Him who is the great Author of good, and Father of mercies.

If gratitude, when exerted towards one another, naturally produces a very pleasing sensation in the mind of a grateful man; it exalts the soul into rapture, when it is employed on this great object of gratitude, on this beneficent Being, who has given us every thing we already possess, and from whom we expect every thing we yet hope for.

Most of the works of the Pagan poets were either direct hymns of their deities, or tended indirectly to the celebration of their respective attributes and perfections. Those who are acquainted with the works of the Greek and Latin poets which are still extant, will, upon reflection, find this observation so true, that I shall not enlarge upon it. One would wonder that more of our Christian poets have not turned their thoughts this way, especially if we consider, that our idea of the Supreme Being is not only infinitely more great and noble than could possibly enter into the heart of a heathen, but filled with every thing that can raise the imagination, and give an opportunity for the sublimest thoughts and conceptions.

Plutarch tells us of a heathen who was singing a hymn to Diana, in which he celebrated her for her delight in human sacrifices, and other instances of cruelty and revenge; upon which a poet who was present at this piece of devotion, and seems to have had a truer idea of the divine nature, told the votary, by way of reproof, that in recompense for his hymn, he heartily wished he might have a daughter of the same temper with the goddess he celebrated.—It was indeed impossible to write the praises of one of those false deities, according to the Pagan creed, without a mixture of impertinence and absurdity.

The Jews, who before the time of Christianity were the only people who had the knowledge of the true God, have set the Christian world an example how they ought to employ this divine talent, of which I am speaking. As that nation produced men of great genius, without considering them as inspired writers, they have transmitted to us many hymns and divine odes, which excel those that are delivered down to us by the ancient Greeks and Romans, in the poetry as much as in the subject to which it is consecrated. This, I think, might be easily shown, if there were occasion for it.

Spectator.

§ 86. *Religion the Foundation of Content: an Allegory.*

Omar, the hermit of the mountain Aubukabis, which rises on the east of Mecca, and overlooks the city, found one evening a man sitting pensive and alone, within a few paces of his cell. Omar regarded him with attention, and perceived that his looks were wild and haggard, and that his body was feeble and emaciated: the man also seemed to gaze steadfastly on Omar; but such was the abstraction of his mind, that his eye did not immediately take cognizance of its object. In the moment of recollection he started as from a dream, he covered his face in confusion, and bowed himself to the ground. "Son of affliction," said Omar, "who art thou, and what is thy distress?" "My name," replied the stranger, "is Hassan, and I am a native of this city: the Angel of adversity has laid his hand upon me, and the wretch whom thine eye compassionates, thou canst not deliver." "To deliver thee," said Omar, "belongs to Him only, from whom we should receive with humility both good and evil: yet hide not thy life from me; for the burthen which I cannot remove, I may at least enable thee to sustain." Hassan fixed his eyes upon the ground and remained some time silent; then fetching a deep sigh, he looked up at the hermit, and thus complied with his request.

It is now six years since our mighty lord the Caliph Almalic, whose memory be blessed, first came privately to worship in the temple of the holy city. The blessings which he petitioned of the prophet, as the prophet's vicegerent, he was diligent to dispense: in the intervals of his devotion, therefore, he went about the city relieving distress and restraining oppression: the widow smiled under his protection, and the weakness of age and infancy was sustained by his bounty. I, who dreaded no evil but sickness, and expected no good beyond the reward of my labour, was singing at my work, when Almalic entered my dwelling. He looked round with a smile of complacency; perceiving that though it was mean it was neat, and though I was poor I appeared to be content. As his habit was that of a pilgrim, I hastened to receive him with such hospitality as was in my power; and my cheerfulness was rather increased than restrained by his presence. After he had accepted some coffee, he asked me many questions; and though by my answers I always endeavoured to excite him to mirth, yet I perceived that he grew thoughtful, and eyed me with a placid but fixed attention. I supected that he had some knowledge of me, and therefore inquired his country and his name. "Hassan," said he, "I have raised thy curiosity, and it shall be satisfied; he who now talks with thee, is Almalic, the sovereign of the faithful, whose seat is the throne of Medina, and whose commission is from above." These words struck me dumb with astonishment, though I had some doubt of their truth: but Almalic, throwing back his garment, discovered the peculiarity of his vest, and put the royal signet upon his finger. I then started up, and was about to prostrate myself before him, but he prevented me: "Hassan," said he, "forbear: thou art greater than I, and from thee I have at once derived humility and wisdom." I answered, "Mock not thy servant, who is but a worm before thee: life and death are in thy hand, and happiness and misery are the daughters of thy will." "Hassan," he replied, "I can no otherwise give life or happiness, than by not taking them away: thou art thyself beyond the reach of my bounty, and possessed of felicity which I can neither communicate nor obtain. My influence over others fills my bosom with perpetual solicitude and anxiety; and yet my influence over others extends only to their vices, whether I would reward or punish. By the bow-string, I can repress violence and fraud; and by the delegation of power, I can transfer the insatiable wishes of avarice and ambition from one object to another: but with respect to virtue, I am impotent; if I could reward it, I would reward it in thee. Thou art content, and hast therefore neither avarice nor ambition: to exalt thee would destroy the simplicity of thy life, and diminish that happiness which I have no power either to increase or to continue."

He then rose up, and commanding me not to disclose his secret, departed.

As soon as I recovered from the confusion and astonishment in which the Caliph left me, I began to regret that my behaviour had intercepted his bounty; and accused that cheerfulness of folly, which was the concomitant of poverty and labour. I now repined at the obscurity of my station, which my former insensibility had perpetuated: I neglected my labour, because I despised the reward; I spent the day in idleness, forming romantic projects to recover the advantages which I had lost: and at night, instead of losing myself in that sweet and refreshing sleep, from which I used to rise with new health, cheerfulness, and vigour, I dreamed of splendid habits and a numerous retinue, of gardens, palaces, eunuchs, and women, and waked only to regret the illusions that had vanished. My health was at length impaired by the inquietude of my mind; I sold all my moveables for subsistence; and reserved only a mattress upon which I sometimes lay from one night to another.

In the first moon of the following year, the Caliph came again to Mecca, with the same secrecy, and for the same purposes. He was willing once more to see the man, whom he considered as deriving felicity from himself. But he found me, not singing at my work, ruddy with health, vivid with cheerfulness; but pale and dejected, sitting on the ground, and chewing opium, which contributed to substitute the phantoms of imagination for the realities of greatness. He entered with a kind of joyful impatience in his countenance, which, the moment he beheld me, was changed to a mixture of wonder and pity. I had often wished for another opportunity to address the Caliph; yet I was confounded at his presence, and, throwing myself at his feet, I laid my hand upon my head and was speechless. "Hassan," said he, "what canst thou have lost, whose wealth was the labour of thine own hand; and what can have made thee sad, the spring of whose joy was in thy own bosom?

What evil hath befallen thee? Speak, and if I can remove it, thou art happy." I was now encouraged to look up, and I replied, "Let my Lord forgive the presumption of his servant, who rather than utter a falsehood would be dumb for ever. I am become wretched by the loss of that which I never possessed: thou hast raised wishes, which indeed I am not worthy thou shouldst satisfy; but why should it be thought, that he who was happy in obscurity and indigence, would not have been rendered more happy by eminence and wealth?"

When I had finished this speech, Almalic stood some moments in suspense, and I continued prostrate before him. "Hassan," said he, "I perceive, not with indignation but regret, that I mistook thy character; I now discover avarice and ambition in thy heart, which lay torpid only because their objects were too remote to rouse them. I cannot therefore invest thee with authority, because I would not subject my people to oppression; and because I would not be compelled to punish thee for crimes which I first enabled thee to commit. But as I have taken from thee that which I cannot restore, I will at least gratify the wishes that I excited, lest thy heart accuse me of injustice, and thou continue still a stranger to thyself. Arise, therefore, and follow me."—I sprung from the ground as it were with the wings of an eagle; I kissed the hem of his garment in an ecstasy of gratitude and joy; and when I went out of my house, my heart leaped as if I had escaped from the den of a lion. I followed Almalic to the caravansera in which he lodged: and after he had fulfilled his vows, he took me with him to Medina. He gave me an apartment in the seraglio; I was attended by his own servants; my provisions were sent from his own table; I received every week a sum from his treasury, which exceeded the most romantic of my expectations. But I soon discovered, that no dainty was so tasteful, as the food to which labour procured an appetite; no slumbers so sweet as those which weariness invited; and no time so well enjoyed, as that in which diligence is expecting its reward. I remembered these enjoyments with regret; and while I was sighing in the midst of superfluities, which though they encumbered life, yet I could not give up, they were suddenly taken away.

Almalic, in the midst of the glory of his kingdom, and in the full vigour of his life, expired suddenly in the bath: such thou knowest was the destiny which the Almighty had written upon his head.

His son Aububekir, who succeeded to the throne, was incensed against me, by some who regarded me at once with contempt and envy; he suddenly withdrew my pension, and commanded that I should be expelled the palace; a command which my enemies executed with so much rigour, that within twelve hours I found myself in the streets of Medina, indigent and friendless, exposed to hunger and derision, with all the habits of luxury, and all the sensibility of pride. O! let not thy heart despise me, thou whom experience has not taught, that it is misery to lose that which it is not happiness to possess. O! that for me this lesson had not been written on the tablets of Providence! I have travelled from Medina to Mecca; but I cannot fly from myself. How different are the states in which I have been placed! The remembrance of both is bitter! for the pleasures of neither can return.—Hassan having thus ended his story, smote his hands together; and, looking upward, burst into tears.

Omar, having waited till this agony was past, went to him, and taking him by the hand, "My son," said he, "more is yet in thy power than Almalic could give, or Aububekir take away. The lesson of thy life the prophet has in mercy appointed me to explain.

"Thou wast once content with poverty and labour, only because they were become habitual, and ease and affluence were placed beyond thy hope; for when ease and affluence approached thee, thou wast content with poverty and labour no more. That which then became the object, was also the bound of thy hope; and he, whose utmost hope is disappointed, must inevitably be wretched. If thy supreme desire had been the delights of Paradise, and thou hadst believed that by the tenor of thy life these delights had been secured, as more could not have been given thee, thou wouldst not have regretted that less was not offered. The content which was once enjoyed, was but the lethargy of thy soul; and the distress which is now suffered, will but quicken it to action. Depart, therefore, and be thankful for all things; put thy trust in Him, who alone can gratify the wish of reason, and satisfy thy soul with good; fix thy hope upon that portion, in comparison of which the world is as the drop of the bucket, and the dust of the balance. Return, my son, to thy labour; thy food shall be again tasteful, and thy rest shall be sweet; to thy content also will be added stability, when it depends not upon that which is possessed upon earth, but upon that which is expected in Heaven."

Hassan, upon whose mind the Angel of instruction impressed the counsel of Omar, hastened to prostrate himself in the temple of the Prophet. Peace dawned upon his mind like the radiance of the morning: he returned to his labour with cheerfulness; his devotion became fervent and habitual; and the latter days of Hassan were happier than the first.

Adventurer.

§ 87. *Bad company—meaning of the phrase—different classes of bad company—ill chosen company—what is meant by keeping bad company—the danger of it, from our aptness to imitate and catch the manners of others—from the great power and force of custom—from our bad inclinations.*

"Evil communication," says the text, "corrupts good manners." The assertion is general, and no doubt all people suffer from such communication; but above all, the minds of youth will suffer; which are yet unformed, unprincipled, unfurnished, and ready to receive any impression.

But before we consider the danger of keeping bad company, let us first see the meaning of the phrase.

In the phrase of the world, good company means fashionable people. Their stations in life, not their morals are considered: and he, who associates with such, though they set him the example of breaking every commandment of the decalogue, is still said to keep good company. —I should wish you to fix another meaning to the expression; and to consider vice in the same detestable light, in whatever company it is found; nay, to consider all company in which it is found, be their station what it will, as bad company.

The three following classes will perhaps include the greatest part of those, who deserve this appellation.

In the first, I should rank all who endeavour to destroy the principles of Christianity—who jest upon Scripture—talk blasphemy—and treat revelation with contempt.

A second class of bad company are those, who have a tendency to destroy in us the principles of common honesty and integrity. Under this head we may rank gamesters of every denomination; and the low and infamous characters of every profession.

A third class of bad company, and such as are commonly most dangerous to youth, includes the long catalogue of men of pleasure. In whatever way they follow the call of appetite, they have equally a tendency to corrupt the purity of the mind.

Besides these three classes, whom we may call bad company, there are others who come under the denomination of ill chosen company: trifling, insipid characters of every kind; who follow no business—are led by no ideas of improvement—but spend their time in dissipation and folly—whose highest praise it is, that they are only not vicious.—With none of these, a serious man would wish his son to keep company.

It may be asked what is meant by keeping bad company? The world abounds with characters of this kind: they meet us in every place; and if we keep company at all, it is impossible to avoid keeping company with such persons.

It is true if we were determined never to have any commerce with bad men, we must, as the apostle remarks, "altogether go out of the world." By keeping bad company, therefore, is not meant a casual intercourse with them, on occasion of business, or as they accidentally fall in our way; but having an inclination to consort with them—complying with that inclination—seeking their company when we might avoid it—entering into their parties—and making them the companions of our choice. Mixing with them occasionally cannot be avoided.

The danger of keeping bad company, arises principally from our aptness to imitate and catch the manners and sentiments of others—from the power of custom—from our own bad inclinations—and from the pains taken by the bad to corrupt us.

In our earliest youth, the contagion of manners is observable. In the boy, yet incapable of having any thing instilled into him, we easily discover from his first actions, and rude attempts at language, the kind of persons with whom he has been brought up: we see the early spring of a civilized education, or the first wild shoots of rusticity.

As he enters farther into life, his behaviour, manners, and conversation, all take their cast from the company he keeps. Observe the peasant, and the man of education; the difference is striking. And yet God hath bestowed equal talents on each. The only difference is, they have been thrown into different scenes of life; and have had commerce with persons of different stations.

Nor are manners and behaviour more easily caught, than opinions and principles. In childhood and youth, we naturally adopt the sentiments of those about us. And as we advance in life, how few of us think for ourselves? How many of us are satisfied with taking our opinions at second hand?

The great power and force of custom forms another argument against keeping bad company. However seriously disposed we may be; and however shocked at the first approaches of vice; this shocking appearance goes off, upon an intimacy with it. Custom will soon render the most disgustful thing familiar. And this is indeed a kind provision of nature, to render labour, and toil, and danger, which are the lot of man, more easy to him. The raw soldier, who trembles at the first encounter, becomes a hardy veteran in a few campaigns. Habit renders danger familiar, and of course indifferent to him.

But habit, which is intended for our good, may, like other kind appointments of nature, be converted into a mischief. The well-disposed youth, entering first into bad company, is shocked at what he hears, and what he sees. The good principles which he had imbibed, ring in his ears an alarming lesson against the wickedness of his companions. But, alas! this sensibility is but of a day's continuance. The next jovial meeting makes the horrid picture of yesterday more easily endured. Virtue is soon thought a severe rule; the gospel, an inconvenient restraint; a few pangs of conscience now and then interrupt his pleasures; and whisper to him, that he once had better thoughts: but even these by degrees die away; and he who at first was shocked even at the appearance of vice, is formed by custom into a profligate leader of vicious pleasures—perhaps into an abandoned tempter to vice.—So carefully should we oppose the first approaches of sin; so vigilant should we be against so insidious an enemy!

Our own bad inclinations form another argument against bad company. We have so many passions and appetites to govern; so many bad propensities of different kinds to watch, that amidst such a variety of enemies within, we ought at least to be on our guard against those without. The breast even of a good man is represented in scripture, and experienced in fact to be in a state of warfare. His vicious inclinations are continually drawing him one way; while his virtue is making efforts another. And if the scriptures represent this as the case even of a good man, whose passions, it may be imagined, are become in some degree cool, and temperate, and who has made some progress in a virtuous course; what may we suppose to be the danger of a raw unexperienced youth, whose passions and appetites are violent and seducing, and whose mind is in a still less confirmed state? It is his part surely to keep out of the way of temptation; and to give his bad inclinations as little room as possible to acquire new strength.

Gilpin.

§ 88. *Ridicule one of the chief arts of corruption—bad company injures our characters as well as manners—presumption the forerunner of ruin—the advantages of good company equal to the disadvantages of bad—cautions in forming intimacies.*

These arguments against keeping bad company, will still receive additional strength, if we consider farther, the great pains taken by the bad to corrupt others. It is a very true, but lamentable fact, in the history of human nature, that bad men take more pains to corrupt their own species, than virtuous men do to reform them. Hence those specious arts, that show of friendship, that appearance of disinterestedness, with which the profligate seducer endeavours to lure the unwary youth; and, at the same time, yielding to his inclinations, seems to follow rather than to lead him. Many are the arts of these corrupters; but their principal art is ridicule. By this they endeavour to laugh out of countenance all the better principles of their wavering proselyte; and make him think contemptibly of those, whom he formerly respected; by this they stifle the ingenuous blush, and finally destroy all sense of shame. Their cause is below argument. They aim not therefore at reasoning. Raillery is the weapon they employ; and who is there, that hath the steadiness to hear persons and things, whatever reverence he may have had for them, the subject of continual ridicule, without losing that reverence by degrees?

Having thus considered what principally makes bad company dangerous, I shall just add, that even were your morals in no danger from such intercourse, your characters would infallibly suffer. The world will always judge of you by your companions: and nobody will suppose, that a youth of virtuous principles himself, can possibly form a connexion with a profligate.

In reply to the danger supposed to arise from bad company, perhaps the youth may say, he is so firm in his own opinions, so steady in his principles, that he thinks himself secure; and need not restrain himself from the most unreserved conversation.

Alas! this security is the very brink of the precipice: nor hath vice in her whole train a more dangerous enemy to you, than presumption. Caution, ever awake to danger, is a guard against it. But security lays every guard asleep. "Let him who thinketh he standeth," saith the apostle, "take heed, lest he fall." Even an apostle himself did fall, by thinking that he stood secure. "Though I should die with thee," said St. Peter to his master, "yet will I not deny thee." That very night, notwithstanding this boasted security, he repeated the crime three several times. And can we suppose, that presumption, which occasioned an apostle's fall, shall not ruin an unexperienced youth? The story is recorded for our instruction; and should be a standing lesson against presuming upon our own strength.

In conclusion, such as the dangers are, which arise from bad company, such are the advantages which accrue from good. We imitate, and catch the manners and sentiments of good men, as we do of bad. Custom, which renders vice less a deformity, renders virtue more lovely. Good examples have a force beyond instruction, and warm us into emulation beyond precept; while the countenance and conversation of virtuous men encourage, and draw out into action every kindred disposition of our hearts.

Besides, as a sense of shame often prevents our doing a right thing in bad company, it operates in the same way in preventing our doing a wrong one in good. Our characters become a pledge; and we cannot, without a kind of dishonour, draw back.

It is not possible, indeed, for a youth, yet unfurnished with knowledge (which fits him for good company) to choose his companions as he pleases. A youth must have something peculiarly attractive to qualify him for the acquaintance of men of established reputation. What he has to do, is, at all events, to avoid bad company; and to endeavour, by improving his mind and morals, to qualify himself for the best.

Happy is that youth, who, upon his entrance into the world, can choose his company with discretion. There is often in vice, a gaiety, an unreserve, a freedom of manners which are apt at sight to engage the unwary; while virtue on the other hand is often modest, reserved, diffident, backward, and easily disconcerted. That freedom of manners, however engaging, may cover a very corrupt heart: and this awkwardness, however unpleasing, may veil a thousand virtues. Suffer not your mind, therefore, to be easily either engaged, or disgusted, at first sight. Form your intimacies with reserve: and if drawn unawares into an acquaintance you disapprove, immediately retreat. Open not your hearts to every profession of friendship. They, whose friendship is worth accepting, are, as you ought to be, reserved in offering it. Choose your companions, not merely for the sake of a few outward accomplishments—for the idle pleasure of spending an agreeable hour; but mark their disposition to virtue or vice; and, as much as possible, choose those for your companions, whom you see others respect: always remembering, that upon the choice of your company depends in a great measure the success of all you have learned; the hopes of your friends; your future characters in life; and, what you ought above all other things to value, the purity of your hearts.

Gilpin.

§ 89. *Religion the best and only Support in Cases of real Stress.*

There are no principles but those of religion to be depended on in cases of real stress; and these are able to encounter the worst emergencies; and to bear us up under all the changes and chances to which our life is subject.

Consider then what virtue the very first principle of religion has, and how wonderfully it is conducive to this end: that there is a God, a powerful, a wise and good Being, who first made the world, and continues to govern it;—by whose goodness all things are designed—and by whose providence all things are conducted to bring about the greatest and best ends. The sorrowful and pensive wretch that was giving way to his misfortunes, and mournfully sinking under them, the moment this doctrine comes into his aid, hushes all his complaints—and thus speaks comfort to his soul,—"It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. —Without his direction, I know that no evil can befal me,—without his permission, that no power can hurt me;—it is impossible a Being so wise should mistake my happiness—or that a Being so good should contradict it.—If he has denied me riches or other advantages—perhaps he foresees the gratifying my wishes would undo me, and by my own abuse of them be perverted to my ruin.—If he has denied me the request of children—or in his providence has thought fit to take them from me—how can I say whether he has not dealt kindly with me, and only taken that away which he foresaw would imbitter and shorten my days? —It does so to thousands, where the disobedience of a thankless child has brought down the parents, grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Has he visited me with sickness, poverty, or other disappointments?—can I say but these are blessings in disguise?—so many different expressions of his care and concern to disentangle my thoughts from this world, and fix them upon another—another, a better world beyond this!" —This thought opens a new face of hope and consolation to the unfortunate:—and as the persuasion of a Providence reconciles him to the evils he has suffered,—this prospect of a future life gives him strength to despise them, and esteem the light afflictions of this life, as they are, not worthy to be compared to what is reserved for him hereafter.

Things are great or small by comparison—and he who looks no farther than this world, and balances the accounts of his joys and sufferings from that consideration, finds all his sorrows enlarged, and at the close of them will be apt to look back, and cast the same sad reflection upon the whole, which the Patriarch did to Pharoah, "That few and evil had been the days of his pilgrimage." But let him lift up his eyes towards heaven, and steadfastly behold the life and immortality of a future state,—he then wipes away all tears from off his eyes for ever; like the exiled captive, big with the hopes that he is returning home, he feels not the weight of his chains, or counts the days of his captivity; but looks forward with rapture towards the country where his heart is fled before.

These are the aids which religion offers us towards the regulation of our spirit under the evils of life,—

but like great cordials, they are seldom used but on great occurrences. In the lesser evils of life, we seem to stand unguarded—and our peace and contentment are overthrown, and our happiness broke in upon, by a little impatience of spirit, under the cross and untoward accidents we meet with. These stand unprovided for, and we neglect them as we do the slighter indispositions of the body—which we think not worth treating seriously, and so leave them to nature. In good habits of the body, this may do,—and I would gladly believe, there are such good habits of the temper, such a complexional ease and health of heart, as may often save the patient much medicine.—We are still to consider, that however such good frames of mind are got, they are worth preserving by all rules:—Patience and contentment,—which like the treasure hid in the field for which a man sold all he had to purchase—is of that price, that it cannot be had at too great a purchase; since without it, the best condition of life cannot make us happy; and with it, it is impossible we should be miserable even in the worst.

Sterne's Sermon.

§ 90. *Ridicule dangerous to Morality and Religion.*

The unbounded freedom and licentiousness of raillery and ridicule, is become of late years so fashionable among us, and hath already been attended with such fatal and destructive consequences, as to give a reasonable alarm to all friends of virtue. Writers have rose up within this last century, who have endeavoured to blend and confound the colours of good and evil, to laugh us out of our religion, and undermine the very foundations of morality. The character of the Scoffer hath, by an unaccountable favour and indulgence, met not only with pardon, but approbation, and hath therefore been almost universally sought after and admired. Ridicule hath been called (and this for no other reason but because Lord Shaftesbury told us so) the test of truth, and, as such, has been applied indiscriminately to every subject.

But in opposition to all the puny followers of Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke, all the laughing moralists of the last age, and all the sneering satirists of this, I shall not scruple to declare, that I look on ridicule as an oppressive and arbitrary tyrant, who like death throws down all distinction; blind to the charms of virtue, and deaf to the complaints of truth; a bloody Moloch, who delights in human sacrifice; who loves to feed on the flesh of the poor, and to drink the tear of the afflicted; who doubles the weight of poverty by scorn and laughter, and throws the poison of contempt into the cup of distress to imbitter the draught.

Truth, say the Shaftesburians, cannot possibly be an object of ridicule, and therefore cannot suffer by it:—to which the answer is extremely obvious: Truth, naked, undisguised, cannot, we will acknowledge with them, be ridiculed; but Truth, like every thing else, may be misrepresented: it is the business of ridicule therefore to disguise her; to dress her up in a strange and fantastic habit; and when this is artfully performed, it is no wonder that the crowd should smile at her deformity.

The noblest philosopher and the best moralist in the heathen world, the great and immortal Socrates, fell a sacrifice to this pernicious talent: ridicule first misrepresented and afterwards destroyed him: the deluded multitude condemned him, not for what he was, but for what he appeared to be, an enemy to the religion of his country.

The folly and depravity of mankind will always furnish out a sufficient fund for ridicule; and when we consider how vast and spacious a field the little scene of human life affords for malice and ill-nature, we shall not so much wonder to see the lover of ridicule rejoicing in it. Here he has always an opportunity of gratifying his pride, and satiating his malevolence: from the frailties and absurdities of others, he forms a wreath to adorn his own brow; gathers together, with all his art, the failings and imperfections of others, and offers them up a sacrifice to self-love. The lowest and most abandoned of mankind can ridicule the most exalted beings; those who never could boast of their own perfection,

> Nor raise their thoughts beyond the earth they tread,
> Even these can censure, those can dare deride
> A Bacon's avarice, or a Tully's pride.

It were well indeed for mankind, if ridicule would confine itself to the frailties and imperfections of human nature, and not extend its baleful influence over the few good qualities and perfections of it: but there is not perhaps a virtue to be named, which may not, by the medium through which it is seen, be distorted into a vice. The glass of ridicule reflects things not only darkly, but falsely also: it always discolours the objects before it ventures to represent them to us. The purest metal, by the mixture of a base alloy, shall seem changed to the meanest. Ridicule, in the same manner, will clothe prudence in the garb of avarice, call courage rashness, and brand good-nature with the name of prodigality; will laugh at the compassionate man for his weakness, the serious man for his preciseness, and the pious man for his hypocrisy.

Modesty is one of virtue's best supports; and it is observable, that wherever this amiable quality is most eminently conspicuous, ridicule is always ready to attack and overthrow it. The man of wit and humour is never so happy as when he can raise the blush of ingenuous merit, or stamp the marks of deformity and guilt on the features of innocence and beauty. Thus may our perfections conspire to render us both unhappy and contemptible!

The lover of ridicule will, no doubt, plead in the defence of it, that his design is to reclaim and reform mankind; that he is listed in the service of Virtue, and engaged in the cause of Truth;—but I will venture to assure him, that the allies he boasts of disclaim his friendship and despise his assistance. Truth desires no such soldier to fight under his banner; Virtue wants no such advocate to plead for her. As it is generally exercised, it is too great a punishment for small faults, too light and inconsiderable for great ones: the little foibles and blemishes of a character deserve rather pity than contempt; the more atrocious crimes call for hatred and abhorrence. Thus, we see, that in one case the medicine operates too powerfully, and in the other is of no effect.

I might take this opportunity to add, that ridicule is not always contented with ravaging and destroying the works of man, but boldly and impiously attacks those of God; enters even into the sanctuary, and profanes the temple of the Most High. A late noble writer has made use of it to asperse the characters and destroy the validity of the writers of both the Old and New Testament; and to change the solemn truths of Christianity into matter of mirth and laughter. The books of Moses are called by him fables and tales, fit only for the amusement of children: and St. Paul is treated by him as an enthusiast, an idiot, and an avowed enemy to that religion which he professed. One would not surely think that there was any thing in Christianity so ludicrous as to raise laughter, or to excite contempt; but on the contrary, that the nature of its precepts, and its own intrinsic excellence, would at least have secured it from such indignities.

Nothing gives us a higher opinion of those ancient heathens whom our modern bigots are so apt to despise, than that air of piety and devotion which runs through all their writings; and though the Pagan theology was full of absurdities and inconsistencies, which the more refined spirits among their poets and philosophers must have doubtless despised, rejected, and contemned; such was their respect and veneration for the established religion of their country, such their regard to decency and seriousness, such their modesty and diffidence in affairs of so much weight and importance, that we very seldom meet with jest or ridicule on subjects which they held thus sacred and respectable.

The privilege of publicly laughing at religion, and the profession of it, of making the laws of God, and the great concerns of eternity, the objects of mirth and ridicule, was reserved for more enlightened ages; and denied the more pious heathens, to reflect disgrace and ignominy on the Christian æra.

It hath indeed been the fate of the best and purest religion in the world, to become the jest of fools; and not only, with its Divine Founder, to be scourged and persecuted, but with him to be mocked and spit at, trampled on and despised. But to consider the dreadful consequences of ridicule on this occasion, will better become the divine than essayist; to him therefore I shall refer it, and conclude this essay by observing, that after all the undeserved encomiums so lavishly bestowed on this child of wit and malice, so universally approved and admired, I know of no service the pernicious talent of ridicule can be of, unless it be to raise the blush of modesty, and put virtue out of countenance; to enhance the miseries of the wretched, and poison the feast of happiness; to insult man, and affront God; to make us, in short, hateful to our fellow-creatures, uneasy to ourselves, and highly displeasing to the Almighty.

Smollet.

§ 91. *On Prodigality.*

It is the fate of almost every passion, when it has passed the bounds which nature prescribes, to counteract its own purpose. Too much rage hinders the warrior from circumspection; and too much eagerness of profit hurts the credit of the trader. Too much ardour takes away from the lover that easiness of address with which ladies are delighted. Thus extravagance, though dictated by vanity, and incited by voluptuousness, seldom procures ultimately either applause or pleasure.

If praise be justly estimated by the character of those from whom it is received, little satisfaction will be given to the spendthrift by the encomiums which he purchases. For who are they that animate him in his pursuits, but young men, thoughtless and abandoned like himself, unacquainted with all on which the wisdom of nations has impressed the stamp of excellence, and devoid alike of knowledge and of virtue? By whom is his profusion praised, but by wretches who consider him as subservient to their purposes; Syrens that entice him to shipwreck; and Cyclops that are gaping to devour him?

Every man whose knowledge, or whose virtue, can give value to his opinion, looks with scorn or pity (neither of which can afford much gratification to pride) on him whom the panders of luxury have drawn into the circle of their influence, and whom he sees parcelled out among the different ministers of folly, and about to be torn to pieces by tailors and jockies, vintners and attornies;

who at once rob and ridicule him, and who are secretly triumphing over his weakness, when they present new incitements to his appetite, and heighten his desires by counterfeited applause.

Such is the praise that is purchased by prodigality. Even when it is yet not discovered to be false, it is the praise only of those whom it is reproachful to please, and whose sincerity is corrupted by their interest; men who live by the riots which they encourage, and who know, that whenever their pupil grows wise, they shall lose their power. Yet with such flatteries, if they could last, might the cravings of vanity, which is seldom very delicate, be satisfied: but the time is always hastening forward, when this triumph, poor as it is, shall vanish, and when those who now surround him with obsequiousness and compliments, fawn among his equipage, and animate his riots, shall turn upon him with insolence, and reproach him with the vices promoted by themselves.

And as little pretensions has the man, who squanders his estate by vain or vicious expenses, to greater degrees of pleasure than are obtained by others. To make any happiness sincere, it is necessary that we believe it to be lasting; since whatever we suppose ourselves in danger of losing, must be enjoyed with solicitude and uneasiness, and the more value we set upon it, the more must the present possession be imbittered. How can he, then, be envied for his felicity, who knows that its continuance cannot be expected, and who is conscious that a very short time will give him up to the gripe of poverty, which will be harder to be borne, as he has given way to more excesses, wantoned in greater abundance, and indulged his appetite with more profuseness.

It appears evident, that frugality is necessary even to complete the pleasure of expense; for it may be generally remarked of those who squander what they know their fortune not sufficient to allow, that in their most jovial expense there always breaks out some proof of discontent and impatience; they either scatter with a kind of wild desperation and affected lavishness, as criminals brave the gallows when they cannot escape it; or pay their money with a peevish anxiety, and endeavour at once to spend idly, and to save meanly; having neither firmness to deny their passions, nor courage to gratify them, they murmur at their own enjoyments, and poison the bowl of pleasure by reflection on the cost.

Among these men there is often the vociferation of merriment, but very seldom the tranquillity of cheerfulness; they inflame their imaginations to a kind of momentary jollity, by the help of wine and riot; and consider it as the first business of the night to stupify recollection, and lay that reason asleep, which disturbs their gaiety, and calls upon them to retreat from ruin.

But this poor broken satisfaction is of short continuance, and must be expiated by a long series of misery and regret. In a short time the creditor grows impatient, the last acre is sold, the passions and appetites still continue their tyranny, with incessant calls for their usual gratifications; and the remainder of life passes away in vain repentance, or impotent desire. *Rambler.*

§ 92. *On Honour.*

Every principle that is a motive to good actions ought to be encouraged, since men are of so different a make, that the same principle does not work equally upon all minds. What some men are prompted to by conscience, duty, or religion, which are only different names for the same thing, others are prompted to by honour.

The sense of honour is of so fine and delicate a nature, that it is only to be met with in minds which are naturally noble, or in such as have been cultivated by great examples, or a refined education. This essay therefore is chiefly designed for those, who by means of any of these advantages are, or ought to be, actuated by this glorious principle.

But as nothing is more pernicious than a principle of action, when it is misunderstood, I shall consider honour with respect to three sorts of men. First of all, with regard to those who have a right notion of it. Secondly, with regard to those who have a mistaken notion of it. And thirdly, with regard to those who treat it as chimerical, and turn it into ridicule.

In the first place, true honour, though it be a different principle from religion, is that which produces the same effects. The lines of action, though drawn from different parts, terminate in the same point. Religion embraces virtue as it is enjoined by the laws of God; honour, as it is graceful and ornamental to human nature. The religious man fears, the man of honour scorns, to do an ill action. The latter considers vice as something that is beneath him; the other, as something that is offensive to the Divine Being: the one, as what is unbecoming; the other, as what is forbidden. Thus Seneca speaks in the natural and genuine language of a man of honour, when he declares "that were there no God to see or punish vice, he would not commit it, because it is of so mean, so base, and so vile a nature."

I shall conclude this head with the description of honour in the part of young Juba:

> Honour's a sacred tie, the law of kings,
> The noble mind's distinguishing perfection,
> That aids and strengthens virtue when it meets her,
> And imitates her actions where she is not;
> It ought not to be sported with. *Cato.*

In the second place, we are to consider those, who have mistaken notions of honour. And these are such as establish any thing to themselves for a point of honour, which is contrary either to the laws of God, or of their country; who think it more honourable to revenge, than to forgive an injury; who make no scruple of telling a lie, but would put any man to death that accuses them of it; who are more careful to guard their reputation by their courage than by their virtue. True fortitude is indeed so becoming in human nature, that he who wants it scarce deserves the name of a man; but we find several who so much abuse this notion, that they place the whole idea of honour in a kind of brutal courage: by which means we have had many among us, who have called themselves men of honour, that would have been a disgrace to a gibbet. In a word, the man who sacrifices any duty of a reasonable creature to a prevailing mode or fashion; who looks upon any thing as honourable that is displeasing to his Maker, or destructive to society; who thinks himself obliged by this principle to the practice of some virtues, and not of others, is by no means to be reckoned among true men of honour.

Timogenes was a lively instance of one actuated by false honour. Timogenes would smile at a man's jest who ridiculed his Maker, and at the same time run a man through the body that spoke ill of his friend. Timogenes would have scorned to have betrayed a secret that was intrusted with him, though the fate of his country depended upon the discovery of it. Timogenes took away the life of a young fellow in a duel, for having spoken ill of Belinda, a lady whom he himself had seduced in her youth, and betrayed into want and ignominy. To close his character, Timogenes, after having ruined several poor tradesmen's families who had trusted him, sold his estate to satisfy his creditors; but, like a man of honour, disposed of all the money he could make of it, in paying off his play debts, or, to speak in his own language, his debts of honour.

In the third place, we are to consider those persons, who treat this principle as chimerical, and turn it into ridicule. Men who are professedly of no honour, are of a more profligate and abandoned nature than even those who are actuated by false notions of it; as there is more hope of an heretic than of an atheist. These sons of infamy consider honour, with old Syphax in the play before-mentioned, as a fine imaginary notion that leads astray young inexperienced men, and draws them into real mischiefs, while they are engaged in the pursuit of a shadow. These are generally persons who, in Shakespeare's phrase, "are worn and hackneyed in the ways of men;" whose imaginations are grown callous, and have lost all those delicate sentiments which are natural to minds that are innocent and undepraved. Such old battered miscreants ridicule every thing as romantic, that comes in competition with their present interest; and treat those persons as visionaries, who dare to stand up, in a corrupt age, for what has not its immediate reward joined to it. The talents, interest, or experience of such men, make them very often useful in all parties, and at all times. But whatever wealth and dignities they may arrive at, they ought to consider, that every one stands as a blot in the annals of his country, who arrives at the temple of honour by any other way than through that of virtue.

Guardian.

§ 93. *On Modesty.*

I know no two words that have been more abused by the different and wrong interpretations, which are put upon them, than these two, Modesty and Assurance. To say such a one is a modest man, sometimes indeed passes for a good character; but at present is very often used to signify a sheepish, awkward fellow, who has neither good-breeding, politeness, nor any knowledge of the world.

Again: A man of assurance, though at first it only denoted a person of a free and open carriage, is now very usually applied to a profligate wretch, who can break through all the rules of decency and morality without a blush.

I shall endeavour, therefore, in this essay, to restore these words to their true meaning, to prevent the idea of Modesty from being confounded with that of Sheepishness, and to hinder Impudence from passing for Assurance.

If I was put to define modesty, I would call it, the reflection of an ingenuous mind, either when a man has committed an action for which he censures himself, or fancies that he is exposed to the censure of others.

For this reason a man, truly modest, is as much so when he is alone as in company; and as subject to a blush in his closet as when the eyes of multitudes are upon him.

I do not remember to have met with any instance of modesty with which I am so well pleased, as that celebrated one of the young prince, whose father, being a tributary king to the Romans, had several complaints laid against him before the senate, as a tyrant and oppressor of his subjects. The prince went to Rome to defend his father; but coming into the senate, and hearing a multitude of crimes proved upon him, was so oppressed when it came to his turn to speak, that he was unable to utter a word. The story tells us, that the fathers were more moved at this instance of modesty and ingenuity, than they could have been by the most pathetic oration; and, in short, pardoned the guilty father for this early promise of virtue in the son.

I take Assurance to be, the faculty of possessing a man's self, or of saying and doing indifferent things without any uneasiness or emotion in the mind. That which generally gives a man assurance, is a moderate knowledge of the world; but above all, a mind fixed and determined in itself to do nothing against the rules of honour and decency. An open and assured behaviour is the natural consequence of such a resolution. A man thus armed, if his words or actions are at any time misinterpreted, retires within himself, and from a consciousness of his own integrity, assumes force enough to despise the little censures of ignorance or malice.

Every one ought to cherish and encourage in himself the modesty and assurance I have here mentioned.

A man without assurance is liable to be made uneasy by the folly or ill-nature of every one he converses with. A man without modesty is lost to all sense of honour and virtue.

It is more than probable, that the prince above-mentioned possessed both those qualifications in a very eminent degree. Without assurance, he would never have undertaken to speak before the most august assembly in the world; without modesty, he would have pleaded the cause he had taken upon him, though it had appeared ever so scandalous.

From what has been said, it is plain that modesty and assurance are both amiable, and may very well meet in the same person. When they are thus mixed and blended together, they compose what we endeavour to express, when we say, a modest assurance; by which we understand, the just mien between bashfulness and impudence.

I shall conclude with observing, that as the same man may be both modest and assured, so it is also possible for the same person to be both impudent and bashful.

We have frequent instances of this odd kind of mixture in people of depraved minds and mean education; who, though they are not able to meet a man's eyes, or pronounce a sentence without confusion, can voluntarily commit the greatest villanies or most indecent actions.

Such a person seems to have made a resolution to do ill, even in spite of himself, and in defiance of all those checks and restraints his temper and complexion seem to have laid in his way.

Upon the whole, I would endeavour to establish this maxim, that the practice of virtue is the most proper method to give a man a becoming assurance in his words and actions. Guilt always seeks to shelter itself in one of the extremes; and is sometimes attended with both.

Spectator.

§ 94. *On disinterested Friendship.*

I am informed that certain Greek writers (Philosophers, it seems, in the opinion of their countrymen) have advanced some very extraordinary positions relating to friendship; as, indeed, what subject is there, which these subtle geniuses have not tortured with their sophistry?

The authors to whom I refer, dissuade their disciples from entering into any strong attachments, as unavoidably creating supernumerary disquietudes to those who engage in them; and, as every man has more than sufficient to call forth his solicitude in the course of his own affairs, it is a weakness they contend, anxiously to involve himself in the concerns of others. They recommend it also, in all connexions of this kind, to hold the bands of union extremely loose; so as always to have it in one's power to straiten or relax them, as circumstances and situations shall render most expedient. They add, as a capital article of their doctrine, that "to live exempt from cares, is an essential ingredient to constitute human happiness: but an ingredient, however, which he, who voluntarily distresses himself with cares in which he has no necessary and personal interest, must never hope to possess."

I have been told likewise, that there is another set of pretended philosophers, of the same country, whose tenets, concerning this subject, are of a still more illiberal and ungenerous cast.

The proposition they attempt to establish, is, that "friendship is an affair of self-interest entirely, and that the proper motive for engaging in it, is, not in order to gratify the kind and benevolent affections, but for the benefit of that assistance and support which is to be derived from the connexion." Accordingly they assert, that those persons are most disposed to have recourse to auxiliary alliances of this kind, who are least qualified by nature or fortune, to depend upon their own strength and powers: the weaker sex, for instance, being generally more inclined to engage in friendships, than the male part of our species; and those who are depressed by indigence, or labouring under misfortunes, than the wealthy and the prosperous.

Excellent and obliging sages, these, undoubtedly! To strike out the friendly affections from the moral world, would be like extinguishing the sun in the natural; each of them being the source of the best and most grateful satisfactions that Heaven has conferred on the sons of men. But I should be glad to know what the real value of this boasted exemption from care, which they promise their disciples, justly amounts to? an exemption flattering to self-love, I confess; but which, upon many occurrences in human life, should be rejected with the utmost disdain. For nothing, surely, can be more inconsistent with a well-poised and manly spirit, than to decline engaging in any laudable action, or to be discouraged from persevering in it, by an apprehension of the trouble and solicitude with which it may probably be attended. Virtue herself, indeed, ought to be totally renounced, if it be right to avoid every possible means that may be productive of uneasiness: for who, that is actuated by her principles, can observe the conduct of an opposite character, without being affected with some degree of secret dissatisfaction? Are not the just, the brave, and the good, necessarily exposed to the disagreeable emotions of dislike and aversion, when they respectively meet with instances of fraud, of cowardice, or of villany? It is an essential property of every well constituted mind, to be affected with pain, or pleasure, according to the nature of those moral appearances that present themselves to observation.

If sensibility, therefore, be not incompatible with true wisdom (and it surely is not, unless we suppose that philosophy deadens every finer feeling of our nature) what just reason can be assigned, why the sympathetic sufferings which may result from friendship, should be a sufficient inducement for banishing that generous affection from the human breast? Extinguish all emotions of the heart, and what difference will remain, I do not say between man and brute, but between man and a mere inanimate clod? Away then with those austere philosophers, who represent virtue as hardening the soul against all the softer impressions of humanity! The fact, certainly, is much otherwise: a truly good man is, upon many occasions, extremely susceptible of tender sentiments; and his heart expands with joy, or shrinks with sorrow, as good or ill fortune accompanies his friend. Upon the whole, then, it may fairly be concluded, that, as in the case of virtue, so in that of friendship, those painful sensations, which may sometimes be produced by the one, as well as by the other, are equally insufficient grounds for excluding either of them from taking possession of our bosoms.

They who insist that "utility is the first and prevailing motive, which induces mankind to enter into particular friendships," appear to me to divest the association of its most amiable and engaging principle. For, to a mind rightly disposed, it is not so much the benefits received, as the affectionate zeal from which they flow, that gives them their best and most valuable recommendation. It is so far indeed from being verified by fact, that a sense of our wants is the original cause of forming these amicable alliances; that, on the contrary, it is observable, that none have been more distinguished in their friendships than those whose power and opulence, but, above all, whose superior virtue (a much firmer support) have raised them above every necessity of having recourse to the assistance of others.

The true distinction, then, in this question is, that, "although friendship is certainly productive of utility, yet utility is not the primary motive of friendship." Those selfish sensualists, therefore, who, lulled in the lap of luxury, presume to maintain the reverse, have surely no claim to attention; as they are neither qualified by reflection nor experience to be competent judges of the subject.

Good Gods! is there a man upon the face of the earth, who would deliberately accept of all the wealth and all the affluence this world can bestow, if offered to him upon the severe terms of his being unconnected with a single mortal whom he could love, or by whom he should be beloved? This would be to lead the wretched life of a detested tyrant, who, amidst pepetual suspicions and alarms, passes his miserable days a stranger to every tender sentiment, and utterly precluded from the heartfelt satisfactions of friendship.

Melmoth's Tran. of Cicero's Lælius.

§ 95. *The Art of Happiness.*

Almost every object that attracts our notice has its bright and its dark side. He who habituates himself to look at the displeasing side, will sour his disposition, and consequently impair his happiness: while he, who constantly beholds it on the bright side, insensibly meliorates his temper, and, in consequence of it, improves his own happiness, and the happiness of all about him.

Arachne and Melissa are two friends. They are, both of them, women in years, and alike in birth, fortune, education, and accomplishments. They were originally alike in temper too; but, by different management, are grown the reverse of each other. Arachne has accustomed herself to look only on the dark side of every object. If a new poem or play makes its appearance, with a thousand brilliancies, and but one or two blemishes, she slightly skims over the passages that should give her pleasure, and dwells upon those only that fill her with dislike.—If you show her a very excellent portrait, she looks at some part of the drapery which has been neglected, or to a hand or finger which has been left unfinished.—Her garden is a very beautiful one, and kept with great neatness and elegancy; but if you take a walk with her in it, she talks to you of nothing but blights and storms, of snails and caterpillars, and how impossible it is to keep it from the litter of falling leaves and worm-casts.—If you sit down in one of her temples, to enjoy a delightful prospect, she observes to you, that there is too much wood, or too little water; that the day is too sunny, or too gloomy; that it is sultry, or windy; and finishes with a long harangue upon the wretchedness of our climate.—When you return with her to the company, in hope of a little cheerful conversation, she casts a gloom over all, by giving you the history of her own bad health, or of some melancholy accident that has befallen one of her daughter's children. Thus she insensibly sinks her own spirits, and the spirits of all around her; and, at last, discovers, she knows not why, that her friends are grave.

Melissa is the reverse of all this. By constantly habituating herself to look only on the bright side of objects, she preserves a perpetual cheerfulness in herself, which, by a kind of happy contagion, she communicates to all about her. If any misfortune has befallen her, she considers it might have been worse, and is thankful to Providence for an escape. She rejoices in solitude, as it gives her an opportunity of knowing herself; and in society, because she can communicate the happiness she enjoys. She opposes every man's virtue to his failings, and can find out something to cherish and applaud in the very worst of her acquaintance. She opens every book with a desire to be entertained or instructed, and therefore seldom misses what she looks for. Walk with her, though it be on a heath or a common, and she will discover numberless beauties, unobserved before, in the hills, the dales, the brooms, the brakes, and the variegated flowers of weeds and poppies. She enjoys every change of weather and of season, as bringing with it something of health or convenience. In conversation, it is a rule with her, never to start a subject that leads to any thing gloomy or disagreeable. You therefore never hear her repeating her own grievances, or those of her neighbours; or, (what is worst of all) their faults and imperfections. If any thing of the latter kind be mentioned in her hearing, she has the address to turn it into entertainment, by changing the most odious railing into a pleasant raillery. Thus Melissa, like the bee, gathers honey from every weed; while Arachne, like the spider, sucks poison from the fairest flowers. The consequence is, that, of two tempers once very nearly allied, the one is ever sour and dissatisfied, the other always gay and cheerful; the one spreads an universal gloom, the other a continual sunshine.

There is nothing more worthy of our attention, than this art of happiness. In conversation, as well as life, happiness very often depends upon the slightest incidents. The taking notice of the badness of the weather, a north-east wind, the approach of winter, or any trifling circumstance of the disagreeable kind, shall insensibly rob a whole company of its good-humour, and fling every member of it into the vapours. If, therefore, we would be happy in ourselves, and are desirous of communicating that happiness to all about us, these minutiæ of conversation ought carefully to be attended to. The brightness of the sky, the lengthening of the day, the increasing verdure of the spring, the arrival of any little piece of good news, or whatever carries with it the most distant glimpse of joy, shall frequently be the parent of a social and happy conversation. Good manners exact from us this regard to our company. The clown may repine at the sunshine that ripens the harvest, because his turnips are burnt up by it; but the man of refinement will extract pleasure from the thunder-storm to which he is exposed, by remarking on the plenty and refreshment which may be expected from the succeeding shower.

Thus does politeness, as well as good sense, direct us to look at every object on the bright side; and, by thus acting, we cherish and improve both. By this practice it is that Melissa is become the wisest and best bred woman living; and by this practice, may every person arrive at that agreeableness of temper, of which the natural and never-failing fruit is happiness. *Harris.*

§ 96. *Happiness is founded in Rectitude of Conduct.*

All men pursue good, and would be happy, if they knew how: not happy for minutes, and miserable for hours; but happy, if possible, through every part of their existence. Either, therefore, there is a good of this steady, durable kind, or there is none. If none, then all good must be transient and uncertain; and if so, an object of the lowest value, which can little deserve either our attention or inquiry. But if there be a better good, such a good as we are seeking; like every other thing, it must be derived from some cause; and that cause must be either external, internal, or mixed; in as much as, except these three, there is no other possible. Now a steady, durable good cannot be derived from an external cause; by reason, all derived from externals must fluctuate as they fluctuate. By the same rule, not from a mixture of the two; because the part which is external will proportionably destroy its essence. What then remains but the cause internal; the very cause which we have supposed, when we place the Sovereign Good in Mind—in Rectitude of Conduct? *Ibid.*

LETTERS ON THE CHOICE OF COMPANY.

§ 97. *Letter I.*

SIR,

As you are now no longer under the eye of either a parent, or a governor, but wholly at liberty to act according to your own inclinations; your friends cannot be without their fears, on your account; they cannot but have some uneasy apprehensions, lest the very bad men with whom you may converse, should be able to efface those principles, which so much care was taken at first to imprint, and has been since to preserve, in you.

The intimacy in which I have, for many years, lived with your family, suffers me not to be otherwise than a *sharer* of their concern, on this occasion; and you will permit me, as such, to lay before you those considerations, which, while they show you your danger, and excite your caution, may not be without their use in promoting your safety.

That it should be the endeavour of our parents, to give us just apprehensions of things, as soon as we are capable of receiving them; and, in our earlier years, to stock our minds with useful truths—to accustom us to the use of our reason, the restraint of our appetites and the government of our passions, is a point, on which I believe, all are agreed, whose opinions about it you would think of any consequence.

From a neglect in these particulars, you see so many of one sex, as much girls at sixty as they were at sixteen—their follies only varied—their pursuits, though differently, yet equally, trifling; and you thence, likewise, find near as many of the other sex, boys in their advanced years—as fond of feathers and toys in their riper age, as they were in their childhood—living as little to any of the purposes of reason, when it has gained its full strength, as they did when it was weakest. And, indeed, from the same source all those vices proceed, which most disturb and distress the world.

When no pains are taken to correct our bad *inclinations*, before they become confirmed and fixed in us; they acquire, at length, that power over us, from which we have the worst to fear—we give way to *them* in the instances where we see plainest, how grievously we must suffer by our compliance—we know not how to resist *them*, notwithstanding the obvious ruin which will be the consequence of our yielding to them.

I don't say, that a right *education* will be as beneficial as a wrong one is hurtful: the very best may be disappointed of its proper effects.

Though the tree you set be put into an excellent soil, and trained and pruned by the skilfulest hand; you are not, however, sure of its thriving: vermin may destroy all your hopes from it.

When the utmost care has been taken to send a young man into the world well principled, and fully apprised of the reasonableness of a religious and virtuous life; he is, yet, far from being temptation proof—he even then may fall, may fall into the worst both of principles and practices; and he is very likely to do so, in the place where you are, if he will associate with those who speak as freely as they act; and who seem to think, that their understanding would be less advantageously shown, were they not to use it in defence of their vices.

That we may be known by our company, is a truth become proverbial. The ends we have to serve may, indeed, occasion us to be often with the persons, whom we by no means resemble; or, the place, in which we are settled, keeping us at a great distance from others, if we will converse at all, it must be with some whose manners we least approve. But when we have our choice—when no valuable interest is promoted by associating with the corrupt—when, if we like the company of the wise and considerate, we may have it; that we then court the one, and shun the other, seems as full a proof, as we can well give, that, if we avoid vice, it is not from the sense we have of the amiableness of virtue.

Had I a large collection of books, and never looked into any that treated on grave and useful subjects, that would contribute to make me wiser or better; but took those frequently, and those only, into my hands, that would raise my laughter, or that would merely amuse me, or that would give me loose and impure ideas, or that inculcated atheistical or sceptical notions, or that were filled with scurrility and invective, and therefore could only serve to gratify my spleen and ill nature; they, who knew this to be my practice, must certainly form a very unfavourable opinion of my capacity, or of my morals. If nature had given me a good understanding, and much of my time passed in reading: were I to read nothing but what was trifling, it would spoil that understanding, it would make me a trifler: and though formed with commendable dispositions, or with none very blameable; yet if my *favourite authors* were—*such* as encouraged me to make the most of the *present hour;* not to look beyond *it*, to taste every pleasure that offered itself, to forego no advantage that I could obtain—*such* as gave vice nothing to fear, nor virtue any thing to hope, in a future state; you would not, I am sure, pronounce otherwise of those writers, than that they would hurt my natural disposition, and carry me *lengths of guilt*, which I should not have gone, without this encouragement to it.

Nor can it be allowed, that *reading* wrong things would thus affect me, but it must be admitted, that *hearing* them would not do it less. *Both* fall under the head of *Conversation;* we fitly apply that term alike to *both;* and we may be said with equal propriety, to converse with books, and to converse with men. The impression, indeed, made on us by what we hear, is, usually, much stronger than that received by us from what we read. That which passes in our usual intercourse is listened to, without fatiguing us: each, then, taking his turn in speaking, our attention is kept awake: we mind throughout what is said, while we are at liberty to express our own sentiments of it; to confirm it, or to improve upon it, or to object to it, or to hear any part of it repeated, or to ask what questions we please concerning it.

Discourse is an application to our eyes, as well as ears; and the one organ is here so far assistant to the other, that it greatly increases the force of what is transmitted to our minds by it. The air and action of the speaker give no small importance to his words: the very tone of his voice, adds weight to his reasoning; and occasions that to be attended to throughout, which, had it come to us from the pen or the press, we should have been asleep, before we had read half of it.

That bad companions will make us as bad as themselves, I don't affirm. When we are not kept from their vices by our principles, we may be so by our constitution; we may be less profligate than they are, by being more cowardly: but what I advance as *certain* is, that we cannot be safe among them—that they will, in some degree, and may in a very great one, hurt our morals. You may not, perhaps, be unwilling to have a distinct view of the reasons, upon which I assert this.

I will enter upon them in my next.

I was going to write adieu, when it came into my thoughts, that though you may not be a stranger to the much censured doctrine of our countryman *Pelagius*—a stranger to his having denied *original* sin; you may, perhaps, have never heard how he accounted for the depravity, so manifest in the whole of our race—He ascribed it to *imitation*. Had he said, that imitation makes some of us very bad, and most of us worse than we otherwise should have been; I think he would not have passed for a heretic.

Dean Bolton.

§ 98. *Letter II.*

SIR,

I promised you, that you should have the reasons, why I think that there is great danger of your being hurt by vicious acquaintance. The first thing I have here to propose to your consideration is, what I just mentioned at the close of my last—our aptness to imitate.

For many years of our life we are forming ourselves upon what we observe in those about us. We do not only learn their phrase, but their manners. You perceive among whom we were educated, not more plainly by our idiom, than by our behaviour. The cottage offers you a brood, with all the rusticity and savageness of its grown inhabitants. The civility and courtesy, which, in a well-ordered family, are constantly seen by its younger members, fail not to influence their deportment; and will, whatever their natural *brutality* may be, dispose them to check its appearance, and express an averseness from what is rude and disgusting. Let the descendant of the meanest be placed, from his infancy, where he perceives every one mindful of decorum; the marks of his *extraction* are soon obliterated; at least his carriage does not discover it: and were the heir of his *Grace* to be continually in the kitchen or stables, you would soon only know the young lord by his clothes, and title: in other respects, you would judge him the son of the groom or the scullion.

Nor is the disposition to imitate confined to our childhood; when this is past, and the man is to show himself, he takes his colours, if I may so speak, from those he is near—he copies their appearance—he seldom is, what the use of his reason, or what his own inclinations would make him.

Are the opinions of the generality, in most points, any other, than what they hear advanced by this or that person high in their esteem, and whose judgment they will not allow themselves to question? You well know, that one could not lately go into company, but the first thing said was—You have, undoubtedly, read ——What an excellent performance it is! The fine imagination of its noble author discovers itself in every line. As soon as this noble author seriously disowned it, all the admiration of it was at an end. Its merit, with those who had most commended it, appeared to be wholly the name of its supposed writer. Thus we find it throughout. It is not *what* is written, or said, or acted, that we examine; and approve or condemn, as it is, in itself, good or bad: our concern is, who writes, who says, or does it; and we, accordingly, regard, or disregard it.

Look round the kingdom. There is, perhaps, scarce a village in it, where the seriousness or dissoluteness of the squire, if not quite a driveller, is not more or less seen in the manners of the rest of its inhabitants. And he, who is thus a pattern, takes his pattern—fashions himself by some or other of a better estate, or higher rank, with whose character he is pleased, or to whom he seeks to recommend himself.

In what a short space is a whole nation metamorphosed! Fancy yourself in the middle of the last century. What grave faces do you every where behold? The most dissolutely inclined suffers not a libertine expression to escape him. He who least regards the practice of virtue, assumes its appearance.

None claim, from their stations, a privilege for their vices. The greatest strangers to the *influence* of religion observe its *form.* The soldier not only forbears an oath, but reproves it; he may possibly make free with your goods, as having more grace than you, and, therefore, a better title to them; but you have nothing to fear from his lewdness, or drunkenness.

The Royal Brothers at length land —The monarchy is restored. How soon then is a grave aspect denominated puritanical; decorum, preciseness; seriousness, fanaticism! He, who cannot *extinguish* in himself *all sense* of religion, is industrious to conceal his having *any—appears* worse than he *is*—would be thought to favour the crime that he dares not commit. The lewdest conversation is the politest. No representation pleases in which decency is consulted. Every favourite drama has its hero a libertine—introduces the magistrate, only to expose him as a knave, or a cuckold; and the priest, only to describe him a profligate or hypocrite.

How much greater the power of fashion is, than that of any laws, by whatsoever penalties enforced, the experience of all ages and nations concurs in teaching us. We readily imitate, where we cannot be constrained to obey; and become by example what our rule seeks in vain to make us.

So far we may be all truly styled players, as we all personate—borrow our characters—represent some other —act a part—exhibit those who have been most under our notice, or whom we seek to please, or with whom we are pleased.

Dean Bolton.

§ 99. *Letter III.*

Sir,

My last endeavoured to show you, how apt we are to imitate. Let me now desire you to consider the disposition you will be under to recommend yourself to those whose company you desire, or would not decline.

Conversation, like marriage, must have consent of parties. There is no being intimate with him, who will not be so with you; and, in order to contract or support an intimacy, you must give the pleasure which you would receive. This is a truth, that every man's experience must force him to acknowledge: we are sure to seek in vain a familiarity with any, who have no interest to serve by us, if we disregard their humour.

In courts, indeed, where the art of pleasing is more studied than it is elsewhere, you see people more dexterously accommodating themselves to the turn of those, for whose favour they wish; but wherever you go, you almost constantly perceive the same *end* pursued by the same *means*, though there may not be the same adroitness in applying them. What a proof have you in your own neighbourhood, how effectual these means are!

Did you ever hear *Charles*—tell a good story—make a shrewd observation—drop an expression, which bordered either on wit or humour? Yet he is welcome to all tables—he is much with those who have wit, who have humour, who are, really, men of abilities. Whence is this, but from the approbation he shows of whatever passes? A story he cannot *tell*, but he has a laugh in readiness for every one he *hears:* by his admiration of wit, he supplies the want of it; and they, who have *capacity*, find no objection to the meanness of *his*, whilst he appears always to think as they do. Few have their looks and tempers so much at command as this man; and few, therefore, are so happy in recommending themselves; but as in *his way* of doing it, there is, obviously, the greatest likelihood of success, we may be sure that it will be *the way* generally taken.

Some, I grant, you meet with, who by their endeavours, on all occasions, to show a superior discernment, may seem to think, that to gain the favour of any one, he must be brought to their sentiments, rather than they adopt his; but I fear these persons will be found only giving too clear a proof, either how absurdly self-conceit sometimes operates, or how much knowledge there may be, where there is very little common sense.

Did I, in describing the creature called MAN, represent him as having, in proportion to his bulk, more brains than any other animal we know of; I should not think this description false, though it could be proved that *some* of the species had scarce any brains at all.

Even where favour is not particularly sought, the very civility, in which he, who would be regarded as a well-bred man, is never wanting, must render him unwilling to avow the most just disapprobation of what his companions agree in acting, or commending. He is by no means to give disgust, and, therefore, when he hears the worst principles vindicated, and the best ridiculed; or when he sees what ought to be matter of the *greatest shame*, done without *any;* he is to acquiesce, he is to show no token, that what passes is at all offensive to him.

Consider yourself then in either of these situations—desirous to engage the favour of the bad man, into whose company you are admitted—or, only unwilling to be thought by him deficient in good manners; and, I think, you will plainly see the danger you should apprehend from him—the likelihood there is, that you should at length lose *the abhorrence* of his crimes, which, when with him, you never express.

Will you ask me, why it is not as *probable*—that you should reform your vicious acquaintance, as that they should corrupt you? Or, why may I not as well suppose—that they will avoid speaking and acting what will give you offence, as that you will be averse from giving them any—that they will consult your inclinations, as that you will theirs?

To avoid the length, which will be equally disagreeable to both of us, I will only answer—Do you know any instance, which can induce you to think this *probable?* Are not you apprised of many instances, that greatly weaken the probability of it?

The vast disproportion, which there is between the numbers of the serious and the dissolute, is so notorious, as to render it unquestionable—that the influence of the latter far exceeds the influence of the former—that a vicious man is much more likely to corrupt a virtuous, than to be reformed by him.

An answer of the same kind I should have judged satisfactory; if, with respect to what I had urged in my former letter, you questioned me—why the readiness to imitate those, with whom we are much conversant, might not as justly encourage you to *hope*, when you associated with the less sober, that they might be won to your regularity, as occasion you to *fear*, that you should be brought to join in their excesses? The good have been for so long a space losing ground among us, and the bad gaining it; and these are now become such a prodigious multitude; that it is undeniable, how much more apt we are to form ourselves on the manners of those who disregard their duty, than on theirs, who are attentive to it.

You will here be pleased to remark, that I do not consider you as setting out with any reforming views—as conversing with the *immoral*, in order to dispose them to reasonable pursuits; but that I only apply to you, as induced to associate with them from the easiness of their temper, or the pleasantry of their humour, or your common literary pursuits, or their skill in some of your favourite amusements, or on some such-like account: and then, what I have observed may not appear a weak argument, that they are much more likely to hurt you, than you are to benefit them.

I will close my argument and my letter, with a passage from a very good historian, which will show you the sense of one of the ablest of the ancient legislators on my present subject.

This writer, mentioning the laws which *Charondas* gave the *Thurians*, says—"He enacted a law with reference to an *evil*, on which former lawgivers had not animadverted, that of keeping bad company. As he conceived that the morals of the good were sometimes quite ruined by their dissolute acquaintance—that vice was apt, like an infectious disease, to spread itself, and to extend its contagion even to the best disposed of our species. In order to prevent this mischief, he expressly enjoined, that none should engage in any intimacy or familiarity with immoral persons—he appointed that an accusation might be exhibited for keeping bad company, and laid a heavy fine on such as were convicted of it."

Dean Bolton.

§ 100. *Letter IV.*

Sir,

Sir *Francis Walsingham*, in a letter to Mr. *Anthony Bacon*, then a very young man and on his travels, expresses himself thus—"The danger is great that we are subject to, in lying in the company of the worser sort. In natural *bodies*, evil airs are avoided, and infection shunned of them, that have any regard to their health. There is not so *probable* a *reason* for the corruptions that may grow to the *mind* of one from the *mind* of another; but the *danger* is far *greater*, and the *effects*, we see more *frequent:* for the number of evil-disposed in mind is greater than the number of sick in body . . . . . . Though the well-disposed will remain some good space without corruption, yet *time*, I know not how, worketh a wound into him. . . . . . Which weakness of ours considered, and easiness of nature, apt to be deceived, looked into; they do best provide for themselves, that *separate themselves*, as far as they can, from the bad, and draw as nigh to the good, as *by any possibility* they can attain to."

To what I have already said, in proof that we should thus *separate ourselves*, I shall now add two further reasons for our doing it: 1. The wrong inclinations, the proneness to violate some or other part of our duty, which we all find in ourselves. 2. The power which custom hath, to reconcile us to what we, at first, most dreaded.

Need I tell you, that our natural depravity has not only been the theme of christian writers; but that the most eminent heathen authors, poets, historians, philosophers, join in confessing it?

Where, alas! is the man, who has not his wrong tendencies to lament? Whom do you know able to conceal them, to prevent a clear discovery of them in his practice?

According as we are liable to act amiss, we, certainly, must be in more or less danger from associating with those, who either will seek to draw us into guilt—or will countenance us in it—or will diminish our abhorrence of it. Some danger from such company there must be even to him, whose *inclinations* are least faulty; since they may be made worse—they may produce bad actions, the repetition of which would form bad habits; and nothing could be so likely to heighten any depravity of disposition, and carry it to the most fatal lengths of misconduct, as a familiarity with those who have no dread of guilt, or none that restrains them from complying with the temptations they meet with to guilt.

You may, perhaps, think, that you could be in no danger from any companion, to whose excesses you found not in yourself the least propensity: but believe me, my friend, this would by no means warrant your safety.

Though such a companion might not induce you to offend in the very same way, that he doth; he would, probably, make you the offender, that you otherwise never would have been. If he did not bring you to conform to his practice, would he not be likely to insinuate his principles? His disregard to *his duty* would tend to render you indifferent to *yours:* and, while he lessened your general regard to virtue, he might make you a very bad man, though you should continue wholly to avoid his particular crimes.

1. The unconcernedness, with which he gave his worst inclinations their scope, could hardly be day after day observed, without making you less solicitous to restrain your own wrong tendencies, and strongly urging you to a compliance with them.

2. The danger there is in conversing with the immoral will be yet more apparent; if you will, next, attend to the power of custom in reconciling us to that, which we, at first, most dreaded.

Whence is it, that veteran troops face an enemy, with almost as little concern as they perform their exercise? The man of the greatest courage among them felt, probably, in the first battle wherein he was, a terror that required all his courage to surmount. Nor was this terror, afterwards, overcome by him, but by degrees; every succeeding engagement abated it: the oftener he fought, the less he feared: by being habituated to danger, he learned, at length, to despise it.

An ordinary swell of the ocean alarms the youth who has never before been upon it; but he, whose *fears* are now raised, when there is nothing that ought to excite them, becomes soon without *any*, even when in a situation, that might justly dismay him; he is calm, when the storm is most violent; and discovers no uneasy apprehensions, while the vessel, in which he sails, is barely not sinking.

You cannot, I am persuaded, visit an hospital—survey the variety of distress there—hear the complaints of the sick—see the sores of the wounded, without being yourself in pain, and a sharer of their sufferings.

The constant attendants on these poor wretches have no such concern: with dispositions not less humane than yours, they do not feel the emotions, that you would be under, at this scene of misery; their frequent view of it has reconciled them to it—has been the cause, that their minds are no otherwise affected by it, than yours is by the objects ordinarily before you.

From how many other instances might it be shown, that the things, which, at their first appearance, strike us with the greatest terror, no sooner become familiar, than they cease to discompose us? Let, therefore, our education have been the carefulest and wisest; let there have been used therein all the means likeliest to fix in us an abhorrence of vice; we, yet, cannot be frequently among those, who allow themselves in it, and have as few scruples about the concealment of any crime they are disposed to, as about its commission, without beholding it with abundantly less uneasiness than its first view occasioned us.

When it is so beheld; when what is very wrong no more shocks us—is no longer highly offensive to us; the natural and necessary progress is to a still farther abatement of our aversion from it: and what is of force enough to conquer a strong dislike, may be reasonably concluded well able to effect some degree of approbation. How far this shall proceed, will, indeed, depend, in a good measure upon our temper, upon our constitutional tendencies, upon our circumstances: but surely we are become bad enough, when it is not the consideration of what is amiss in any practice that withholds us from it—when we only avoid it, because it is not agreeable to our humour; or, because the law punishes it; or because it interferes with some other criminal gratification, which better pleases us.

I began this with an extract from a letter of *Walsingham:* I will end it with one from a letter of *Grotius*, when ambassador in *France*, to his brother, concerning his son, whom he had recommended to that gentleman's care.

After having expressed his wishes that the young man might be formed a complete advocate, he concludes thus—"Above all things I entreat you to cultivate those seeds of knowledge, sown by me in him, which are productive of piety; and to recommend to him, for companions, such persons as are themselves careful to make a proficiency therein."

GROT. EP. 426.
Dean Bolton.

§ 101. *Letter V.*

SIR,

When I ended my last I continued in my chair, thinking of the *objections* which might be made to what I had written to you. The following then occurred to me.

That, when we are in possession of truth, from fair examination and full evidence, there can be very little danger of our being induced to quit it, either by repeatedly hearing the weak objections of any to it, or by remarking them to *act* as wrongly as they *argue*—That, as in *mathematics* the proposition, which we had once demonstrated, would always have our assent, whomsoever we heard cavilling at it, or ridiculing our judgment concerning it: so in *morals*, when once a due consideration of the essential and unchangeable differences of things hath rendered us certain of what is right and our duty; we can never be made less certain thereof, whatever errors, in judgment or practice, we may daily observe in our associates, or daily hear them absurd enough to defend—That, when we not only plainly *perceive* the practice of virtue to be most becoming us—to be what the nature and reason of things require of us; but actually *feel*, likewise, the satisfaction which it affords, the solid pleasure which is its inseparable attendant; there can be *no more ground* to *suppose*, that our having continually before us the follies and vices of any would lead us to depart from what we know to be fittest, and have experienced to be best for us, than there can be to *believe*, that a man in his wits would leave the food, which his judgment approved and his palate relished, for another sort, which he saw, indeed, pleasing to his companions, but which he was certain would poison them.

How little weight there is in this kind of arguing, I think every one might be convinced, who would attend to his own practice, who would consider the *numerous instances* in which he cannot but condemn it—in which he cannot but acknowledge it contrary to what his present welfare requires it should be.

Let us think the most justly of our duty, and shun, with the greatest care, all who would countenance us in a *departure* from it; we still shall find *that departure too frequent*—we shall experience it so, even when it is truly lamented; and when, to avoid it, is both our wish and our endeavour. And if the influence of truth may receive such hindrance from our *natural depravity*, from this *depravity*, even when we have kept out of the way of all, who would encourage us to favour it, there, surely, must be a high degree of probability, that we shall be less mindful of our obligations, when we are not only prompted by our own appetites to violate them, but moved thereto by the counsel and example of those, whose conversation best pleases us; and whose opinions and actions will, therefore, come with a more than ordinary recommendation to us.

The assent, which we give, upon sufficient evidence, to *moral* truths, could no more be unsettled by ridicule and sophistry, than that which we give to *mathematical* truths, did our minds always retain the same disposition with respect to the one, that they do, as to the other.

With regard to the latter, we are never willing to be deceived—we always stand alike affected towards them: our *conviction* about them was obtained, *at first*, upon such grounds, as must *always* remain our inducements to preserve it: no lust could be gratified, no interest served, by its acting less forcibly upon us: in its defence the credit of our understanding is greatly concerned. And how vain must ridicule and sophistry be necessarily thought, where their only aim is, that we should acknowledge a superior discernment in those persons, whose opposition increases our contempt of their *ignorance*, by making a plainer discovery of it?

As for *moral* truths, they are often disagreeable to us—when we have had the fullest *evidence* of them, we want not, occasionally, the inclination to overlook it: if, under *some circumstances*, we are ready to acknowledge *its force;* there are *others*, when we will not give it any attention. Here fancy and hope interpose: a *governing passion* allows us only a faint view of, or wholly diverts our notice from, whatever should be our inducement to restrain it; and suffers us to dwell on nothing but what will justify, or excuse, us in giving way to it. Our reluctance to admit, that we have not *judged* as we ought to have done, is strangely abated, when we thereby are set at liberty to *act* as we please.

When the endeavour is to laugh us, or to argue us, out of those principles that we, with much *self-denial* adhere to; we shall but feebly oppose its success. He has a strong party on his side within our bosoms, who seeks to make us quit *opinions*, which are still controlling our *affections*. If we are not secure from acting contrary to our *duty*, what cogent proofs soever we have of its being such, and what satisfaction soever we have had in its discharge; we are highly concerned to avoid every *temptation* to offend: and it, undoubtedly, is a very strong one, to *hear* continually what is likeliest to remove the fear of indulging our appetites; and continually to *see*, that they who apply to us *act* as they *advise*—allow themselves in the liberties, they would have us to take; and are under none of the checks, which they prompt us to throw off.

Though what we did not relish, and what we thought would speedily destroy us, we might not eat, when our *companions* showed themselves fond of it, and pressed us to taste it; yet if we apprehended no *immediate danger* from their meal—if we were eye-witnesses of its being attended with *none*—if they were continually expressing their high delight in it, and repeating their assurances, that all, either our indifference towards, or disrelish of it, was only from prejudice and prepossession; we, very probably, should at length yield, and quit both our disgust of their repast, and our dread of its consequences. And if this might ensue, when we were invited to partake of that, which was less agreeable to our palates, what should be feared, when our company tempted us to *that*, which we could be pleased with, and were only withheld from by such an *apprehension of danger*, as nothing could sooner remove, than our observing those, with whom we most conversed, to be without it?

Reason is, certainly, always on the side of duty. Nor is there, perhaps, any man, who, when he seriously considers what is best for him to do, will not purpose to do that which is right. But, since we can act without consideration in the most important articles, and nothing is less likely to be considered, than what we find quite customary with others—what we see them act without remorse or scruple; when we are, day after day, eye-witnesses of our associates allowing themselves in a wrong practice, persisting in it without expressing the least dread of its consequences; it is as absurd to think, that our moral feeling should not be injured thereby, as it is to suppose, that our hands would preserve the same softness, when they had been for years accustomed to the oar, which they had when they first took it up; or, that hard labour would affect us as much when inured to it, as when we entered upon it.

I will, for the present, take my leave of you with an *Italian* proverb, and an *English* one exactly answerable to it—

Dimmi con chi tu vai, sapro chel che fai.
Tell me with whom thou goest, and 'll tell thee what thou doest.

Dean Bolton.

§ 102. *Letter VI.*

SIR,

I know not what I can add on the present subject of our correspondence, that may be of greater service to you than the following short relation.—I may not, indeed, be exact in every particular of it, because I was not at all acquainted with the *gentleman*, whom it concerns; and because many years have passed since I received an account of *him;* but as my information came from persons, on whose veracity I could depend, and as what they told me much affected me when I heard it, and has, since, been very often in my thoughts; I fear that the melancholy description, which you will here have of human frailty, is but too true in every thing material therein.

At the first appearance of ——— in town, nothing, perhaps, was more the topic of conversation, than his merit. He had read much: what he had read, as it was on the most useful subjects, so he was thoroughly master of it; gave an exact account of it, and made very wise reflections upon it. During his long residence at a distance from our metropolis, he had met with few, to whom he was not greatly superior, both in capacity and attainments: yet this had not in the least disposed him to dictate, to be positive and assuming, to treat any with contempt or neglect.

He was obliging to all who came near him; talked on the subjects which they best understood, and which would be likeliest to induce them to take their full share of the conversation.

They, who had spent every winter near the *court*, saw nothing in his behaviour, that showed how far he had lived from *it*—nothing which was less suitable to any civility, that could be learned in *it*.

His manners were only less courtly, in their simplicity and purity. He did not, often, directly reprove the *libertine discourse* of his equals; but would recommend himself to none, by expressing the slightest approbation of *such discourse:* he *showed* it did not please him, though he declined *saying* so.

He forebore that invective against the manners of the age, which could only irritate; and thought that, at his years, the fittest censure he could pass on them, would be to avoid them. It seemed, indeed, his particular care, that he might not be represented either as a bigot, or a cynic; but yet, as he knew how to defend his principles, so he showed himself, on every proper occasion, neither afraid nor ashamed to engage in their defence.

His conversation was among *persons* of his own *rank*, only so far as decorum required it should be: *their* favourite topics were so little to his taste, that his leisure hours, where he could have his choice, were passed among those, who had the most learning and virtue, and, whether distinguished, or not, by their ancestors' worth, would be so by their own.

He had high notions of his duty to his country; but having seen what self-interestedness, at length, showed itself, where he had heard the strongest professions of patriotism, it made him very cautious with whom he engaged, and utterly averse from determining of any as friends to the public, merely because they were opposers of the court.

No one judged more rightly of the hurt that must ensue, from irreligion spreading itself among the common people; and, therefore, where his example was most remarked, and could be most efficacious, he took particular care, that it should promote a just reverence of the Deity.

Thus did *A. A.* set out in the world, and, thus behaved, for some years, notwithstanding the bad examples he had every where before him, among those of his own station.

In one of the accomplishments of a gentleman (though, surely, one of the very meanest of them) he was thought to excel; and many fine speeches were made him upon that account. They were but too much regarded by him; and, gradually, drew him often into the company that he would have despised, had he heard less of his own praise in it. The compliments so repeatedly paid him by the frivolous, reconciled him, at length, to them. As his attachment to them got ground, his seriousness lost it. The patriot was no more—The zeal he had for the morals of his countrymen abated.—

The tragical conclusion of his story, let those tell you, who would not feel that concern at the relation of it, which I should do: this you certainly may learn from it—that, as the constant dropping of water wears away the hardest stone, so the continual *solicitations* of the vicious are not to be withstood by the firmest mind—all, who are in the way of them, will be hurt by them—wheresoever they are used, they will make an impression—he only is secure from their force, who will not hazard its being tried upon him.

In what you have hitherto received from me, I have argued wholly from *your own dispositions*, and endeavoured to show you, from thence, the danger of having bad companions. See now your danger from *their dispositions*. And, first, let these persons be considered only, in general, as partial to their notions and practices, and eager to defend them.

Whatever our *persuasion* or *conduct* is, we are usually favourable to it; we have our plea for it: very few of us can bear, with any patience, that it should be judged irrational: The approbation of it is a compliment to our understanding, that we receive with pleasure; and to censure it, is such a disparagement of us, as doth not fail to disgust us. I will not say, there are *none* to be found, that give themselves little or no concern who thinks or acts as they do; but it is certain, that, ordinarily, we are desirous to be joined in the cause we espouse—we are solicitous to vindicate and spread our opinions, and to have others take the same courses with us. Should I allow you to be as intent on this, as any of your acquaintance are; yet, pray, consider what you may expect, when you stand alone, or when a majority is against you—when each of them relieves the other in an attack upon you—when this attack is, day after day, repeated—when your numerous opponents join in applauding, or strengthening, or enlivening their several objections to your sentiments; and in treating whatever you can urge in your defence, as absurd, or weak and impertinent—when your peace can only be purchased by your silence—when you find, that there is no hope of bringing those you delight to be with into your opinions, that they confirm each other in opposition to you, and that you can only be agreeable to them, by adopting their maxims, and conforming to their manners.

It is next to be considered what you may fear from an intimacy with the immoral, when they must look upon themselves to be *reproached* by such of their acquaintance, as will not concur with them in their excesses. They cannot but do this; because all who seek either to make them alter their manners, or to weaken their influence upon others, charge them with what is, really, the highest *reproach* to them; and because they are sensible, that the arguments likeliest to be used by any one for his not complying with them, are grounded on the *mischief* of their conduct, or on its *folly*. Regard then yourself, as in their place. Reflect how you would behave towards the man whose opinion of you was, that you acted either a very criminal, or a very imprudent part: reflect, I say, how you would behave towards the person thus judging of you, if you wished to preserve a familiarity with him, but yet was resolved to persist in your notions and practice. You, certainly, would try every method to remove his distaste of them; you would colour them as agreeably as you possibly could: you would spare no pains to weaken every objection, he could have to them—you would, in your turn, attack his maxims and manners; you would seek to convince him upon what slight grounds he preferred them to yours—you would apply to every artifice, that could give them the appearance of being less defensible, or that could incline him to overlook what might be urged in their defence.

And if this might naturally be supposed the part you would act towards others; you ought to expect that they, in the same circumstances, would behave alike towards you. But can you think it prudent to let them try, with what success they may proceed? Would not caution be your most effectual security? Would it not be the wisest method of providing for your safety, to keep out of the way of danger?

You are, further, to look upon those, from associating with whom I would dissuade you, as extremely solicitous to be kept in countenance. The vicious well know, to how many objections their conduct is liable: they are sensible, to what esteem *good morals* are entitled, what *praise* they *claim*, and what they in the most corrupt times, *receive*.

Virtue is so much for the interest of mankind, that there can never be a general agreement, to deny all manner of applause to the practice of *it:* such numbers are made sufferers by a departure from *its* rules, that there are few crimes, which meet not with an extensive censure. You have long since learned it to be the language of paganism itself, that

"All, who act contrary to what the reason of things requires—who do what is hurtful to themselves or others, must stand self-condemned:" and you cannot want to be informed, in what light they are seen by those who do not share their guilt. The *endeavour*, therefore, of such men, while they are without any purpose of amendment, will, unquestionably, be, to make their cause as specious as possible, by engaging many in its defence, and to silence censure, by the danger, that would arise from the numbers it would provoke. The motives to this endeavour, when duly reflected on, will fully satisfy us, with what zeal it must be accompanied; and it may well, therefore, alarm all, on whom its power is likely to be tried—may well induce them to consider seriously, what they have to fear from it, how much their virtue may suffer by it.

I will conclude this with a short story of the Poet *Dante*, for which *Bayle* quotes *Petrarch*. Among other visits made by *Dante*, after his banishment from *Florence*, one was to the then much-famed *Can*, Prince of *Verona*.

Can treated him, at first with great civility; but this did not last: and, by the little complaisance at length shown the Poet, he plainly perceived that he ceased to be an acceptable guest.

Scholars, it seems, were not *Can's* favourites—he liked those much better, who studied to divert him; and ribaldry was by no means the discourse that least pleased him. Suspecting that this did not raise *Dante's* opinion of him, he one day took occasion to single out the most obnoxious of the libertine crew, that he entertained; and, after high praises given the man, turning to *Dante*, he said, I *wonder* how it is, that this mad fellow is *beloved* by us all, as giving us the pleasure which, really, we do not find in your company, wise as you are thought to be.

Sir, answered the Poet, you would not *wonder* at this, if you considered, that our love of any proceeds from their manners being suitable, and their dispositions similar, to our own.

Dean Bolton.

§ 103. *Letter VII.*

SIR,

I have but one thing more to propose to your consideration, as a dissuasive from associating with the vicious: and it is—the way in which they ordinarily seek to corrupt those, with whom they converse.

The *logic* of the immoral contributes but little to increase their numbers, in comparison of what they effect by *raillery* and *ridicule.* This is their *strength;* they are sensible of its being so; and you may be assured that it will be exerted against you. There is nothing that cannot be jested with; and there is nothing that we, universally, bear worse, than to be made the jest of any.

What reasoning on moral subjects may not have its force evaded by a man of wit and humour; and receive a turn, that shall induce the less considerate to slight it, as weak and inconclusive? The most becoming practice—that which is most our duty, and the importance of which to our present welfare is most evident, a lively fancy easily places in a ridiculous view, and thereby brings it into an utter neglect.

That reverence of the Deity, which the best both ancient and modern writers have so strongly recommended—which the worthiest men in every age have so carefully expressed—which any observation of nature, any atention to our own frame fails not to inculcate, is yet, by being represented under the garb of superstition, or fanaticism, seen among us to such disadvantage, that many, our military gentlemen especially, appear to take a pride in showing themselves divested of it.

Conjugal fidelity, though of such moment to the peace of families—to their interest—to the prosperity of the commonwealth, that, by the laws of the wisest and best regulated states, the severest punishment has been inflicted on the violation of it, is, nevertheless, by the levity with which some have treated it, so much, at present, slighted, that the *adulterer* is well received: women, who would think it the grossest affront to have their virtue questioned, who affect the character of the strictest observers of decorum, shun *him* not—show *him* the utmost complaisance. Whatever dishonour, in this case, falls on any, it accrues wholly to the injured person.

Can you assign a better reason, why the intemperate, among the meaner people, have so prodigiously increased their numbers, than the banter they use towards such as they meet with disposed to sobriety,—the mockery with which they treat it,—the songs and catches with which they are so plentifully provided, in derision of it?

I cannot give you the very terms of Lord *Shaftesbury*, as I have not his works; but I think I may be certain there is an observation in them to this effect—that, "had the enemies to Christianity exposed its first professors, not to wild beasts, but to ridicule, their endeavours to stop its progress might have had very different *success* from what they experienced."

Had the wit of man been only concerned in the spreading that *religion,* I believe the conjecture well founded. But this success could no more have affected the truth of that *religion,* than it lessens the worth of a public spirit, of honesty, of temperance, that so many have been laughed out of them—that the jest made of them has occasioned their being so rare among us.

The author of the *Beggars' Opera* gives the true character of his *Newgate* tribe, when he exhibits them ludicrous on all pretences to virtue, and thus hardening each other in their crimes. It was the most effectual means to keep up *their* spirits under *their* guilt, and may well be judged the likeliest method of bringing *others* to share it.

"The Duke of Buckingham," says a late writer, "had the art of turning persons or things into ridicule, beyond any man of the age. He possessed the young king [*Charles II.*] with very ill principles, both as to religion and morality, and with a very mean opinion of his father, whose stiffness was, with him, a subject of raillery." It is elsewhere observed, that, to make way for the ruin of the Lord *Clarendon*, "he often acted and mimicked him in the King's presence, walking stately with a pair of bellows before him, for the purse, and Colonel *Titus* carrying a fire-shovel on his shoulder, for the mace; with which sort of banter and farce the king was too much delighted."

Such are the impressions, to the disparagement of the best things, and of the best men, that may be made by burlesque and buffoonery; they can destroy the efficacy of the wisest precepts, and the noblest examples.

The monarch here spoken of may, perhaps, be thought as ill-disposed as the worst of his favourites; and rather humoured, than corrupted, by the sport they made with all that is, ordinarily, held serious. Were this admitted to be true of him—were we to suppose his natural depravity not heightened by any thing said or done before him, in derision of virtue or the virtuous; yet the effects of his being accustomed to such representations may be looked upon as extremely mischievous; when we may, so probably, attribute to them the loose he gave to his natural depravity —the little decorum he observed—that utter carelessness to save appearances, whence so much hurt ensued to the morals of his people, and whereby he occasioned such distraction in his affairs, so weakened his authority, so entirely lost the affections of the best of his subjects; and whence that he did not experience still worse consequences, may be ascribed to a concurrence of circumstances, in which his prudence had no share.

The weakness of an argument may be clearly shown—the arts of the sophister may be detected, and the fallacy of his reasoning demonstrated—to the most subtile objections there may be given satisfactory answers: but there is no confuting raillery—the acutest logician would be silenced by a *Merry Andrew*.

It is no manner of purpose that we have *reason* on our side, when the *laugh* is against us: and how easy is it, by playing with our words —by a quibble—by the lowest jest, to excite that *laugh!*

When the company is disposed to attack your principles with drollery, no plea for them is attended to; the more serious you show yourself in their defence, the more scope you give to the mirth of your opponents.

How well soever we have informed ourselves of the motives to a right conduct, these motives are not attended to, as often as we act: our ordinary practice is founded on the impression, that a former consideration of them has made; which impression is very liable to be weakened—wants frequently to be renewed in the same way, that it was at first produced.

When we continually hear our virtue bantered as more prejudice, and our notions of honour and decorum treated as the sole effects of our pride being dexterously flattered—when our piety is frequently subjecting us to be derided as childishly timorous, or absurdly superstitious; we soon know not how to persuade ourselves, that we are not more scrupulous than we need to be; we begin to question, whether, in settling the *extent* of our *obligations*, we have sufficiently consulted the *imperfections* of our *nature*—whether our *judgment* is without its bias from our *fears*.

Let our seriousness be exhibited to us in that odd figure, which wit and humour can easily give it; we shall be insensibly led to judge of it, according to its appearance, as thus overcharged; and under the disadvantage, in which it is shown us, we shall, first, seem unconcerned at the greater liberties that others take, and, by degrees, proceed to take the very same ourselves.

The person, whom we most highly and justly honoured, if the buffoonery of our companions were constantly levelled at him, would soon have his worth overlooked by us; and, though we might not be brought to think of him as contemptibly as they appeared to do, our reverence of him would certainly, at length, abate, and both his advice and example have much less influence upon us.

Of this you shall have an instance in my next.

I will here only add what *Jamblichus* mentions as practised by *Pythagoras*, before he admitted any into his school:—he inquired, "Who were their intimates"—justly concluding, that they, who could like bad companions, would not be much profited by his instructions.

Dean Bolton.

§ 104. *Letter VIII.*

SIR,

What follows will discharge the promise which I made you at the conclusion of my last.

S was the oracle of his county; to whatever point he turned his thoughts, he soon made himself master of it. He entered, indeed, so early upon business, that he had little time for books; but he had read those which best deserved his perusal, and his memory was the faithful repository of their contents.

The helps, that he had not received from reading, he had abundantly supplied the want of, by observation and conversation.

The compass of his knowledge was amazing. There was scarce any thing, of which one in his station ought to be informed, wherein he appeared to be ignorant. Long experience, great sagacity, a ready apprehension, a retentive memory, the resort to him of all sorts of people, from whom any thing could be learned, and an intimacy with some of the worthiest persons of every profession, enabled him to speak on most points with such justness and copiousness, as might induce you to conclude, upon first being with him, that the topic, on which his discourse turned, was what he had particularly and principally attended to. Though he owned himself never to have so much as looked into the writings of atheists or deists; yet, from the promiscuous company he had been obliged to keep, and the freedom with which all spoke their sentiments to him, there was not, perhaps, a material objection to the Christian religion, of which he was not apprised, and which he had not well considered.

Sensible of his strength, and ever desirous to use it in the best of causes—in the service of that truth, which operates on men's practice, and would, if attended to, rectify it throughout, he did not discourage the most free speakers; he calmly and willingly heard what they could say against his faith, while they used reason and argument; but drollery and jest he failed not, though with great good-humour, to reprove, as a species of misrepresentation—as a sure evidence, that truth was not sought—as an artifice, to which none would apply, who were not conscious of their weakness, who did not despair of supporting their notions by rational proofs.

Virtue and true religion had not, perhaps, an abler advocate than this gentleman; but whatever service his tongue might do them, his manners, certainly, did them far greater; he convinced you of their *excellency*, by exhibiting to your senses their *effects* ——he left you no room to question how amiable they were when it was from *their* influence upon him, that *he* so much engaged your esteem and affection; he proved undeniably, how much they should be our *care*, by being himself an instance, how much they contributed to our *happiness.*

Never, certainly, did piety sit easier upon any man——never, perhaps, was any man more esteemed by the very persons, between whose practice and his there was the widest difference.

The superior talents he discovered, and his readiness to employ them for the benefit of all, who applied to him, engaged alike their admiration and their love.

The obligations, conferred by *him*, obtained the height of complaisance towards his *son.* Invitations were made the youth from all quarters; and there was not a young man of any figure near him, who was not introduced to him, and directed to pay him particular civility. They, who sought to attach him closest to them by *consulting* his humour, were never without their arguments for *licensing* it. "True it was, this or that *pursuit* might not be to the taste of his *father;* but neither did it suit his years—when he was a *young man*, he, undoubtedly, acted as *one;* he took the diversions, allowed himself in the gratifications, to which youth inclines: no wonder that he should now censure what he could not relish—that he should condemn the draught, which his head could not bear, and be indifferent to the features, which he could not distinguish without his spectacles."

When this kind of language had abated the reverence due to so excellent an instructer, the buffoon interposed still farther to weaken his influence; gave an air of affectation to his decorum—of hypocrisy to his seriousness—of timorousness to his prudence—of avarice to his wise economy—burlesqued the *advice*, that he might be supposed to give, the arguments with which he was likely to support *it*, and the reproof he would naturally use, when he did not see a disposition to follow *it.*

Soon as the young man had attained the age, at which the law supposes us *sufficiently discreet*, he expressed a most earnest desire to have an opportunity of appearing *so.* Repeated promises were made, that if a proper allowance was settled on him, and leave given him to choose a place of abode, there should not be the least mismanagement; the income assigned him should answer every article of expense.

The son's importunity was seconded by the fond mother's, and their joint solicitations prevailed. The youth was now accessible, at all times, to the most profligate of his acquaintance; and one part of their entertainment usually was, to set his excellent father's maxims and manners in the most disadvantageous light. This failed not to bring on a disregard to both—so entire a disregard to them that the whore and the card-table took up all the hours which the bottle relieved not.

Thus fell the heir of one of the worthiest of our countrymen!—It was to no purpose, that such an admirable example had been set him by the person he was most likely to regard—that such particular care had been taken to reason him into a discharge of his duty—that he had been present, when the most subtile advocates for irreligion either were silenced, or induced to acknowledge their principles to be much less defensible, than they had hitherto thought them. None of the impressions of what had been done for him, or said to him, or had passed before him, could hold out against ridicule; it effaced every trace of them, and prepared him to be as bad, as his worst companions could be inclined to make him. How great a neglect of him ensued! They who had laughed him out of the reverence due to his parent's worth, rendered him soon despised by all whose esteem could profit or credit him; and he died in the 70th year of his constitution, when but in the 25th of his age.

Dean Bolton.

§ 105. *Letter IX.*

SIR,

My last gave you a melancholy instance of the hurt done by *ridicule* to the heir of a most worthy man, not many miles from you. What influence it had towards the condemnation of him, to whom the epithet of *divine* might, perhaps, be more properly applied, than to any one who ever lived under the sole guidance of reason, has long, you know, been matter of dispute. I will only observe, concerning the comic writer's ridicule of *Socrates*—

1. That, when such a representation could be made of so *excellent* a *person*, it demonstrates, that no degree of *worth* can secure *any person* from an attempt to destroy his credit; and that they, whose capacities fully enable them to discern this *worth*, may be its spitefulest enemies, and bend their wits to disparage it——

2. That, when such a representation could be made by a man of good parts, with any confidence of success, it is, farther, an evidence of the probability, that the highest and most just reputation may suffer from ridicule, and that it may bring into contempt what is entitled to the greatest esteem and honour——

3. That if the *Athenians* were so well pleased with the means used to lessen the character of this ornament, not only to his country, but his species, as to render the interposition of a powerful party in the state necessary, to prevent the poet's abuse from meeting with all the success he promised himself in it; we are fully taught, what may be the pernicious effects of ingenious drollery—how much it may weaken the force of any instruction, or any example.

Where violent methods are pursued, in order to withdraw us from any religious *practice* or *opinion;* they who thus oppose it showing thereby, that *they* look upon *it* as somewhat of great importance, teach *us* to do the same; and often increase our attachment to *it*—render us more earnest about *it*, than we otherwise should have been. But where such *practice* or *opinion* is treated as a matter of jest—where it meets with all the slight that scoffing and laughter can express, we scarcely know how to preserve our regard to it, as a thing of much consequence; and from esteeming it of little moment, we easily proceed to judge it of none at all.

The *force* that is offered us, on account of our persuasion, either occasions such an aversion from him, who applies to it, as prevents his having any influence upon us; or engages us in so careful an attention to the grounds, upon which we formed our judgment, as fixes us in the resolution not to alter it. But when all passes under the appearance of good humour—when only mirth and pleasantry are exerted against us, we neither contract that hatred towards those, by whom we are thus treated, which will be our security from any bad impressions they can make upon us; nor are we excited to any examination of our *principles* that can confirm us in *them.* The freedom which our companions use, in sporting with what we have hitherto reverenced, will tempt us to conclude, that its importance is far from being obvious; nor, indeed, can it fail, unless our minds have a more than ordinary firmness, to raise at length some doubt in us, whether we have not been too fanciful or too credulous. And as

> "The woman, who deliberates, is lost,"

we may fear the man will be so likewise, who suffers himself to question how well founded his seriousness is, merely because his associates are continually deriding it.

Would you not, industriously, keep out of the way of those who had power to torture you, and whom you knew ready to do it, if you would not be guided by them, but was determined to think and act as your own reason should direct? Believe me, Sir, the scoffer should be as much shunned by the friend of virtue, as the inquisitor by the friend of truth. Whoever would attain or preserve a just sense of his duty, should have as little intercourse as possible with those who would discourage sincerity—who would oppose it, either by the fagot, or the fair,* of *Smithfield.* A very uncommon resolution is required to be steady to the principles, from avowing which we must expect to be the heroes in a farce; though we need not apprehend that it will make us victims to the flames.

What *your* temper may be, I cannot affirm; but I really think that, with great numbers, drollery is not only a species of persecution, but the most dangerous kind of it; they would as soon be scourged, as mocked; be burthened with the cross, as habited with the purple. You can scarcely be enough aware of the risk you run from being jested with, as a visionary or a bigot—as one of much whim, or very little penetration.

But enough of the inducements, that vicious companions would be under to corrupt you, and the means they would use to do it.

The care you should take, in the choice of your company, will be the subject of but one letter more from

Dean Bolton.

§ 106. *Letter X.*

SIR,

All I have to add, on what has lately been the subject of my correspondence with you, will be contained in this letter. I will not lengthen it by apologizing for it.

Might I suppose you so fortified by a right disposition, a wise education, good sense, and a thorough knowledge of the reasonableness of the practice enjoined by your religion, that every attempt to corrupt your morals would miscarry; this hurt, however, you would be sure to find from being much in the company of vicious men, that you would be less careful to become *eminently virtuous*—you would be less careful to fulfil your obligations, than you otherwise would be. While you saw *others* so much worse than yourself, you would not consider how much better you ought to be, than you at present are—while *their* gross faults were avoided, you would not consider, how much there is in *you* that ought to be amended.

We measure what is, in any way, commendable, by comparing our share of it with that of our neighbour: we do not regard in what degree, as to itself, we possess the good, but in how greater a degree it is possessed by us, than by others.

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* *Bartholomew* fair, during which plays and farces were formerly, from morning to night, the entertainment of the populace.

Among a very ignorant people, a scholar of the lowest form will pass, both in their and his own judgment, for an adept.

You would, I am sure, pronounce of any gentleman, who kept mean company, that there was little hope of his ever acting a part, which would greatly credit him: while he loved to be chiefly with those, who would own, and do homage to, his superiority; you would think him by no means likely to cultivate much real worth. And were it to be said, that you should make such a judgment of him, not because of any impression he would receive *from his companions*, but because of the disposition he showed in the choice *of them;* I should be glad to know, how that man must be thought affected towards religion and virtue, who could be willingly present, where he was sure that they would be grossly depreciated. Whoever could bear a disparagement of them, must have so little sense of their worth, that we must justly conclude him ill prepared for resisting the attempt to deprive them wholly of their influence upon him. And, therefore, we may as fitly determine, from the disposition evidenced by him who keeps *bad* company, what his morals will at length be; as we can determine from the turn of mind, discovered by one who keeps *mean* company, what his figure in the world is likely to be.

Those among us, whose capacities qualify them for the most considerable attainments—who might raise themselves to an equality with the heroes in literature of the last century, sit down contented with the superiority they have over their contemporaries—acquiesce in furnishing a bare specimen of what they could do, if their genius were roused, if they were to *exert* their abilities. They regard only the advantage they possess over the idle and illiterate, by whom they are surrounded; and give way to their ease, when they may take it; and yet appear as considerable in *their* times, as the learned men, we most admire, did in *their respective* ages.

How many could I mention, to whom nature has been most liberal of her endowments, who are barely in the list of authors, who have only written enough to show how much honour they would have done their country, had their application been called out, and yet their names must have been no better known than those of their acquaintance, unless their diligence had equalled their capacity.

What is thus notoriously true of literary desert, is equally so of moral: the persons, to whom we allot a greater share of it, than has long been found in any in their stations, how have they their sense of right withheld from exerting itself, by the few they meet with disposed to animate them to any endeavour towards correcting the general depravity—by the connexions they have with such numbers, whose rule is their inclination—by that utter disregard to duty, which they see in most of those with whom they have an intercourse.

Alas! in the very best of us, a conviction of what becomes us goes but a little way in exciting us to practise it. Solicitations to be less observant of it are, from some or other quarter, perpetually offering themselves; and are by no means likely to be withstood, if our resolutions are not strengthened by the wise counsels and correspondent examples of our associates.

" Behold! young man—you live in an age, when it is requisite to fortify the mind by examples of constancy."

This *Tacitus* mentions as the speech of the admirable *Thrasea* to the quæstor, sent to tell him he must die; and by whom he would have it remarked, with what composure he died.

Nor is it only when our virtue endangers our life, as was then the case, that such examples are wanted. Wherever there is a prevailing corruption of manners: they who would act throughout the becoming part, must be animated to it by what they hear from, and see in others, by the patterns of integrity which they have before them.

We are easily induced to judge some deviation from our rule very excusable; and to allow ourselves in it: when our thoughts are not called off from our own weakness and the general guilt: but while we are conversant with those, whose conduct is as unsuitable, as our own, to that of the multitude, we are kept awake to a sense of our obligations—our spirits are supported—we *feel* the courage that we *behold*—we see what can be done by such as share our frail nature; and *we* are ashamed to *waver*, where *they persevere.*

Aristotle considers friendship as of three kinds; one arising from virtue, another from pleasure, and another from interest; but justly determines, that there can be no true friendship, which is not founded in virtue.

The friendship contracted from pleasure or profit, regards only the pleasure or profit obtained thereby; and ceases, when these precarious motives to it fail: but that, to which virtue gives birth, not having any accidental cause—being without any dependence on humour or interest—arising wholly from intrinsic worth, from what we are in ourselves, never fluctuates, operates steadily and uniformly, remains firm and uninterrupted, is lasting as our lives. That which is the essential qualification of a *friend*, should be the chief recommendation in a *companion*. If, indeed, we have any concern for real worth; with whom should we be more desirous to converse, than with those who would accompany us, and encourage us in the pursuit of it.

The same writer, mentioning the use that friends are of to us in every part of life, remarks the benefit which young men find from them to be—"That they keep them in their duty."

Had he thought, that any thing could have been urged more in behalf of friendship; he, undoubtedly, would have observed it. And when such is the language of so able an instructer, and of one who guided himself in his instructions only by the certain, the present advantage, that would attend a conformity to them; the lesson we have here for the choice of company must appear worthy the notice even of those, who will have no other guides but reason and nature.

If to keep us steady to our duty be the best office that can be done us—if they, who are our friends, will be thus serviceable to us—if the virtuous alone can be our friends, our conversation should be chiefly with the virtuous; all familiarity with the vicious should be avoided; we should consider those, who would destroy our virtue, as our enemies—our very worst enemies, whilst endeavouring to deprive us of the greatest blessing, that it is in our power to obtain.

Dean Bolton.

§ 107. *On Pleasure.*

SECTION I.

To ———

While you are constantly engaged in the pursuit of knowledge, or in making what you have acquired of use to your fellow creatures—while information is *your* amusement, and to become wiser is as much your aim, in all the company you keep, as in all the books you read; may I not justly think it matter of astonishment to you, that such numbers of your species should be quite unmindful of all rational improvement—solely intent on schemes of mirth and diversion—passing their lives in a round of sporting and trifling.

If every age has its madness, and one is distinguished by its warlike humour, a second by its enthusiasm, a third by its party and political rage; the distraction of the present may truly be pronounced, its turn to pleasure, so sadly possessing those of each sex and of all ages—those of every profession and employment—the several ranks and orders of men; that they, who are strangers to the sudden changes in human dispositions, are apt to think, that all seriousness and application—all the valuable attainments, which are the reward only of our pains, must, inevitably, be soon lost among us.

I am not out of hopes, that what thus threatens, in the opinion of some, our speedy ruin, and has its very great mischief denied by none, who give it the least attention, will one day receive as remarkable an opposition from your *pen*, as it now does a discouragement from your *example*.

Let, in the mean time, a sincere well-wisher to his countrymen interpose his mean endeavours to serve them—offer to their consideration some, perhaps not wholly contemptible, arguments against the pursuit, to which they are so blameably attached—show them pleasure in that true light in which they are unwilling to see it—teach them, not that it should be always declined, but that they should never be enslaved to it—represent the dangers, to which it exposes them, yet point out how far it may be enjoyed with innocence and safety.

Every man seems to be so far free, as he can dispose of himself—as he can maintain a due subordination in the parts of his frame, use the deliberation proper to acquaint him with what is most for his advantage, and, according to the result thereof, proceed to action. I consider each hindrance to the knowledge of our true happiness, or to its pursuit, as, according to its degree, an abridgment of our liberty; and, I think that he may be truly styled a slave to pleasure, who follows it, wheresoever directed to it by appetite, passion, or fancy. When we listen to their suggestions in the choice of good, we allow them an authority, that our Creator never intended they should have; and when their directions in that choice are actually complied with, a lawless sway ensues—the use of our nobler faculties becomes obstructed—our ability to deliberate, as we ought, on our conduct, gradually fails, and to alter it, at length wholly ceases.

Our sensual and rational parts are almost in continual opposition: we add to the power of the former, by a thoughtless, idle, voluptuous life; and to that of the latter by reflection, industry, continence.

As you cannot give way to appetite, but you increase its restlessness, you multiply its demands, and become less able to resist them; so the very same holds true of every principle that opposes reason; if capable to influence you in one instance, it will more easily do it in a second, gaining ground, till its dominion over you becomes absolute.

When the question concerns our angry passions, all are ready to acknowledge the danger of not restraining them, the terrible subjection to which such remissness exposes us. These falling more under the general notice, from the apparency of the disorder, and extent of the mischief which they occasion, a better judgment is ordinarily made of them, than of affections less tumultuous, less dangerous to our associates: but there can be no reason imaginable why anger, if less carefully watched and resisted, should exercise, at length, the most unhappy tyranny over us, which will not hold as to any passion or lust whatsoever. And as with respect to violent resentment, we are ready to gratify it, whatever it costs us: so let what will be the passion or lust that governs us, no prudential considerations are a counterpoise for it.

With regard to pleasure, the fallacy of our reasoning upon it lies here; we always look upon the enjoyment of it as a single act, as a compliance with our liking in this or that instance: the repetition of that indulgence is not seen under a dependence on any former, or under the least connexion with any future. That such a pursuit should engage us seems to be wholly from our choice; and this choice is thought to be as free, at the second time of our making it, as at the first, and at the twentieth, as at the second. Inclination is never beheld as possible to become constraint—is, I mean, never regarded as capable of being indulged, till it cannot be resisted. No man ever took the road of pleasure, but he apprehended that he could easily leave it: had he considered his whole life likely to be passed in its windings, the preference of the ways of virtue would have been indisputable.

But as sensual pursuits could not engage so many, if something very delightful were not expected in them; it will be proper to show how unlikely they are to answer such an expectation—what there is to discourage us from attaching ourselves to them.

Consider sensual pleasure under the highest possible advantages, it will yet be found liable to these objections.

First, That its *enjoyment* is fleeting, expires soon, extends not beyond a few moments: our spirits sink instantly under it, if in a higher degree: nor are they long without being depressed, when it less powerfully affects them. A review here affords me no comfort: I have here nothing delightful to expect from reflection. The gratifications, in which I have allowed myself, have made me neither wiser nor better. The fruit was relished while upon my tongue, but when passed thence I scarcely retain the idea of its flavour.

How transitory our pleasures are, we cannot but acknowledge, when we consider, how many we, in different parts of our lives, eagerly pursue, and then wholly decline.

That, which is the high *entertainment* of our infancy, doth not afford us the least, when this state is passed; what then delights us much in our youth, is quite tasteless to us, as we approach manhood; and our engagements at this period give way to some others, as we advance in age.

Nor do our pleasures thus pass only with our years, but, really, those which best suit our time of life, and on the pursuit of which we are most intent, must be interrupted in order to be enjoyed.

We can no more long bear pleasure, than we can long endure fatigue; or, rather, what we call pleasure, after some continuance, becomes fatigue.

We want relief in our diversions, as well as in our most serious employments.

When *Socrates* had observed, "of how unaccountable a nature that thing is, which men call Pleasure, since, though it may appear to be contrary to Pain, as never being with it in the same person, yet they so closely follow each other, that they may seem linked, as it were, together." He then adds—"If *Æsop* had attended to this, he would, I think, have given us a fable, in which the Divinity, willing to reconcile these two enemies, but yet unable to do it, had, nevertheless, so connected them in their extremities, that where the one comes, the other shall be sure to succeed it."

From the excess of joy, how usual is the transition to that of dejection! Laughter, as well as grief, calls for tears to ease us under it; and it may be even more dangerous to my life to be immoderately delighted, than to be severely afflicted.

Our pleasures then soon pass; and, *secondly*, their repetition certainly cloys.

As the easiness of posture and agreeableness of place wear off by a very short continuance in either; it is the same with any sensual gratifications which we can pursue, and with every enjoyment of that kind, to which we can apply. What so delights our palate, that we should relish it, if it were our constant food? What juice has nature furnished, that, after being a frequent, continues to be a pleasing draught? Sounds, how artfully soever blended or successive, tire at length the ear; and odours, at first the most grateful, soon either cease to recreate us, or become offensive to us. The finest prospect gives no entertainment to the eye that has been long accustomed to it. The pile, that strikes with admiration each casual beholder, affords its royal inhabitant no comfort, but what the peasant has in his cottage.

That love of variety and change, to which none of our kind are strangers, might be a lesson to us, where our expectations are ill grounded, where they must necessarily be disappointed; for if no man ever yet lived, who could say of any of the pleasures of sense—on this I repose myself—it quite answers my hopes from it—my wishes rove not beyond it: if none could ever affirm this, it is most evident, that we in vain search after permanent delight from any of the objects, with which we are now conversant—that the only difference between the satisfactions we pursue, and those we quit, is, that we are already tired of the one, and shall soon be of the other.

Hear the language of him, who had tried the extent of every sensual pleasure, and must have found the uncloying, had any such existed: "I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth. I gave myself to wine, I made me great works, I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards, I made me gardens, I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit. I made me pools of water, I amassed gold and silver, I had possessions, above all that were in *Jerusalem* before me. I tried what love, what music, what all the delights of the sons of men could effect: whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy. Then I looked on all my works, on all my pursuits, and behold! all was vanity and vexation of spirit."

Tully mentions *Xerxes* as having proposed a reward to the man who could make known to him some new pleasure. The monarch of the East, it seems, met with nothing within the bounds of his mighty empire that could fix his inclinations. The most voluptuous people on earth had discovered no delight, that their sovereign could acknowledge otherwise than superficial. Happy! had it been a lesson to their prince, or could it be one to us, where our good should be sought—what pursuits were likely to bring us blessings certain to improve, as well as endure.

§ 108. *On Pleasure.*

SECTION II.

A *third* disadvantage ensuing to us from our attachment to the delights, which appetite and fancy purvey, is, that it indisposes us for useful inquiries, for every endeavour worthy of our nature, and suiting the relations in which we are placed.

The disappointment, which the *Persian* emperor met with in all his schemes of the voluptuous kind, did not put him on applying to those of a different one. Experience showed him his folly, but could not teach him wisdom—it could not, when it had convinced him of the vanity of his pursuits, induce him to relinquish them.

We find a *Solomon*, indeed, discovering his error, acknowledging that he had erred, and bearing testimony to religion and virtue as alone productive of true happiness; but where are we to look for another among the votaries to sensuality, thus affected, thus changed?

As some have observed of *courts*, that such, who live in them, are always uneasy there, yet always unwilling to retreat; the very same holds true of the licentious practice, which they too generally countenance: fully convinced of its vanity and folly, we continue to our last moments attached to it—averse from altering the conduct, which we cannot but disapprove. Our faculties are, indeed, so constituted, that our capacity for many enjoyments extends not beyond such a period in our being: if we will not quit them, they will us—will depart, whatever our eagerness may be for their continuance. But let us not deceive ourselves; when they are gone as to their sense, they are not as to their power. He who says to his youth, eat, drink, and be merry—who thinks of nothing else at that season, will hanker after delicacies, when he has neither teeth to chew, nor palate to distinguish them; will want the cup, which he cannot lift; and seek for mirth, when he will thereby become the object of it. The habit operates, when none of the inducements for our contracting it remain; and when the days of pleasure are past, those of wisdom and virtue are not the nearer. Our dispositions do not decay with our strength. The prudence, which should attend grey hairs, doth not necessarily come to us with them. The young rake is a lascivious obscene wretch, when he owes his warmth to his flannel; delights in the filthy tale, when his hearers are almost poisoned by the breath, with which he utters it; and when least able to offend in act, he does it in desire.

That the humour for fighting or racing, or whatever inclination governed us in this world, accompanies us to the other, is not an entire fiction of the poet, but, assuredly, has thus much truth in it, that whatever humour we indulge, it accompanies us to the close of life. There is a time, when our manners are pliant, when the counsels of the sober operate upon us as successfully, as the insinuations of the corrupt; but when that time is passed, our customs are, daily, working themselves into our *constitution*, and want not many years to become scarce distinguishable from it. God, I am persuaded, has formed us all with such apprehensions of what is right, as, if a proper care were taken to preserve and improve them, would have the happiest influence upon our practice; but when the season for extending this care to them has been neglected, they are in most of us greatly impaired, and in some appear almost wholly lost.

Let the *understanding* remain uninformed, till half the age of man is past, and what *improvement* is the best then likely to make? how irksome would it seem to be put upon any? It is with our will the very same; turned for half or three parts of our life to sloth and wantonness, to riot and excess, any correction of it, any alteration to the pursuits becoming us, may seem quite hopeless. While we are devoting ourselves to pleasure, we are weakening every principle whereby virtue can engage us, we are extinguishing within us all sense of true desert—subduing conscience—divesting ourselves of shame—corrupting our natural notions of good and evil; and so indisposing ourselves for consideration, that our constant endeavour will be to decline it. Thus when our *follies* are a *burden* to us, their correction seems a greater; and we try what ease may be found by varying, rather than seek any from quitting, them.

Fourthly, The larger our share is of outward enjoyments, and the dearer they are to us; so much the more afflicting our concern will be to *leave* this *scene* of them—so much the greater terror and torment shall we receive from the apprehension, how soon we may be obliged to do it.

Let the man of pleasure colour it the most agreeably, place it in the fairest point of view, this objection will remain in its full strength against him: "you are not master of the continuance of the good, of which you boast; and can you avoid thinking of its removal, or bear the thoughts thereof, with any calmness and composure?" But what kind of happiness is that, which we are in hourly fears of losing, and which, when lost, is gone for ever?

If I am here only for a few days, the part I ought to act is, certainly, that of a traveller on his journey, making use, indeed, of such conveniences as the road affords him, but still regarding himself as upon his road—never so incumbering himself that he shall be unwilling to advance, when he knows he must do it—never so diverting himself at any resting place, that it shall be painful to him to depart thence.

When we are accustomed to derive all our comforts from sense, we come to want the very idea of any other: this momentary part of our existence is the full extent we give to our joys; and we have the mortifying reflection continually before us, that their conclusion is nearer every hour we are here, and may possibly take place the very next. Thus each accession of delight will really be but a new source of affliction, become an additional motive for complaint of the short space allowed for its enjoyment.

The mind of man is so disposed to look forward, so fitted to extend its views, that, as much as it is contracted by sensuality, it cannot be fixed thereby to the instant moment: we can never, like the beasts, be so far engrossed by the satisfaction before us, but the thoughts will occur, how often may we hope to repeat it—how many distant hours it is likely to relieve—how much of our duration can it advantage? and the scanty continuance which our most sanguine hopes can assign it, must, therefore, be in some degree its abatement—must be an ingredient in our draught sure to imbitter the many pleasing ones which compound it. And what a wise part are we then acting, when we are taking the brutes' portion for ours, and cannot have all the benefits even of that! cannot remove the inconveniences of reason, when we forego its comforts!

These are some of the many disadvantages inseparable from pleasure, and from the expectation of which none of its votaries are exempt. We cannot attach ourselves to any of the delights, which appetite or fancy provides, but we shall be sure to find them quickly passing—when repeated, cloying—indisposing us for worthy pursuits—rendering us averse from quitting the world, and uneasy as often as it occurs to our thoughts, how soon our summons may be to depart.

§ 109. *On Pleasure.*

SECTION III.

But what, you'll say, must all then commence philosophers? Must every gay amusement be banished the world? Must those of each sex and of all ages have their looks ever in form, and their manners under the regulation of the severest wisdom? Has nature given us propensities only to be resisted? Have we ears to distinguish harmony, and are we never to delight them with it? Is the food which our palate best relishes, to be therefore denied it? Can odours recreate our brain, beauty please our eye, and the design of their structure be, that we should exclude all agreeable sensation from either? Are not natural inclinations nature's commands? Are they not its declarations whence we may obtain our good, and its injunctions to seek it thence? Is any thing more evident, than that serious applications cannot long be sustained—that we must sink under their weight—that they soon stupify or distract us? The exercise of our intellectual part is the fatigue of our corporeal, and cannot be carried on, but by allowing us intervals of relaxation and mirth. Deny us pleasure, and you unfit us for business; and destroy the man, while you thus seek to perfect him.

A full answer might, I should think, be given to whatever is here alleged, by enlarging on the following observations.

1. Pleasure is only so far censured, as it costs us more than it is worth—as it brings on a degree of uneasiness, for which it doth not compensate.

2. It is granted, that we are licensed to take all that pleasure, which there is no reason for our declining. So much *true pleasure*, or so much pleasure, as is not counterbalanced by any inconveniences attending it, is so much happiness accruing to him who takes it, and a part of that general good, which our Creator designed us.

3. As the inclinations, with which mankind were originally formed, were, certainly, very different from those, which guilt has since propagated; *many restraints* must, therefore, be necessary, which would not have been so, had our primitive rectitude been preserved.

4. Bad education, bad example, increase greatly our natural depravity, before we come to reason at all upon it; and give the appearance of good to many things, which would be seen in a quite different light, under a different education and intercourse.

These particulars let it suffice barely to mention; since, it is here admitted, that when there is no reason for our declining any pleasure, there is one for our taking it, I am more especially concerned to show, when there is a reason, why pleasure should be declined—what those limits are, which ought to be prescribed to our pleasures, and which when any, in themselves the most innocent, pass, they necessarily become immoral and culpable. A minute discussion of this point is not here proposed: such observations only will be made upon it, as appear to be of more general use, and of greatest importance.

What I would, first, consider as rendering any pleasure blameable is,

When it raises our Passions.

As our greatest danger is from them, their regulation claims our constant attention and care. *Human laws* consider them in their effects, but the *divine law* in their aim and intention. To render me obnoxious to men, it is necessary that my impure lust be gratified, or an attempt be made to gratify it; that my anger operate by violence, my covetousness by knavery: but my duty is violated, when my heart is impure, when my rage extends not beyond my looks and my wishes, when I invade my neighbour's property but in desire. The man is guilty the moment his affections become so, the instant that any dishonest thought finds him approving and indulging it.

The inquiry, therefore, what is a fit amusement, should always be preceded by the consideration of what is our disposition. For, it is not greater madness to suppose, that equal quantities of food or liquor may be taken by all with equal temperance, than to assert, that the same pleasure may be used by all with the same innocence. As, in the former case, what barely satisfies the stomach of one, would be a load insupportable to that of another; and the draught, that intoxicates me, may scarcely refresh my companion: so in the latter, an amusement perfectly warrantable to this sort of constitution, will to a different become the most criminal. What liberties are allowable to the calm, that must not be thought of by the choleric! how securely may the cold and phlegmatic roam, where he, who has greater warmth and sensibility, should not approach! what safety attends the contemner of gain, where the most fatal snares await the avaricious! some less *governable passion* is to be found in them, whose resolution is steadiest, and virtue firmest: upon *that* a constant guard must be kept; by any relaxation, any indulgence, it may be able to gain that strength, which we shall afterwards fruitlessly oppose. When all is quiet and composed within us, the discharge of our duty puts us to little trouble; the performance thereof is not the heavy task, that so many are willing to represent it: but to restore order and peace is a work very different from preserving them, and is often with the utmost difficulty effected. It is with the natural body, as with the politic; rebellion in the members is much easier prevented than quelled; confusion once entered, none can foresee to what lengths it may proceed, or of how wide a ruin it may be productive.

What, likewise, renders any pleasure culpable, is its making a large, or an unseasonable, demand upon our time. No one is to live to himself, and much less to confine his care to but one, and that the worst, part of himself. Man's proper employment is to cultivate right dispositions in his own breast, and to benefit his species—to perfect himself, and to be of as much use in the world, as his faculties and opportunities will permit. The satisfactions of sense are never to be pursued for their own sake: their enjoyment is none of our end, is not the purpose, for which God created us; amuse, refresh us it may, but when it busies, when it chiefly engages us, we act directly contrary to the design, for which we were formed; making that our *care*, which was only intended to be our *relief*.

Some, destitute of the necessaries, others, of the conveniencies of life, are called to labour, to commerce, to literary application, in order to obtain them; and any remissness of these persons, in their respective employments or professions, any pursuit inconsistent with a due regard to their maintenance, meets ever with the harshest censure, is universally branded, as a failure in common prudence and discretion: but what is this animal life, in comparison with that to which we are raised by following the dictates of reason and conscience? how despicable may the man continue, when all the affluence to which his wishes aspire, is obtained?

Can it then be so indiscreet a part, to follow *pleasure*, when we should mind our *fortune?* do all so clearly see the blame of this? and may we doubt how guilty that attachment to it is, which lays waste our understanding—which entails on us ignorance and error—which renders us even more useless than the beings whom instinct alone directs? all capacity for improvement is evidently a call to it. The neglect of our powers is their abuse; and the slight of *them* is that of their giver. Whatever talents we have received, we are to account for: and it is not from revelation alone that we learn this: no moral truth commands more strongly our assent, than that the qualifications bestowed upon us, are afforded us, in order to our cultivating them—to our obtaining from them the advantages they can yield us; and that foregoing such advantages, we become obnoxious to him, who designed us them, as we misapply his gift, and knowingly oppose his will. For, the surest token we can have, that any perfections ought to be pursued, is, that they may be attained: our ability to acquire them is the voice of God within us to endeavour after them. And would we but ask ourselves the question, did the Creator raise us above the herd, and doth he allow us to have no aims nobler than those of the herd—to make its engagements the whole of ours? we could not possibly mistake in the answer. All, who have reason given them, know that they may and ought to improve it, ought to cultivate it at some seasons, and ever to conform to it.

Greater privileges call us but to more important cares. You are not placed above your fellow-creatures, you have not the leisure which they want, that you may be more idle and worthless, may devote more of your time to vanity and folly, but that you may become more eminent in the perfections you acquire, and the good you do. He, who has all his hours at command, is to consider himself as favoured with those opportunities to increase in wisdom and virtue, which are vouchsafed to few; if no good effect follows; if having them, he only misapplies them; his guilt is according to what his advantage might have been.

The dispensations of heaven are not so unequal, as that some are appointed to the heaviest toil for their support, and others left to the free, unconstrained enjoyment of whatever gratifications their fancy suggests. The distinction between us is not that of much business and none at all; it is not, that I may live as I can, and you as you please; a different employment constitutes it. The mechanic has his part assigned him, the scholar his, the wealthy and powerful theirs, each has his task to perform, his talent to improve,—has barely so much time for his pleasure, as is necessary for recruiting himself—as is consistent with habitual seriousness, and may rather qualify than interrupt it.

We are furnished with numerous arguments, why the graver occupations should be remitted—why the humour for gaiety and mirth should be allowed its place; and no man in his right mind ever taught the contrary. Let the delights of sense have their season, but let them stand confined to it; the same absurdity follows the excess on either side, our never using, and our never quitting them.

Be not *over wise*, is an excellent rule; but it is a rule full as good, and much more wanted—That *some wisdom* should be sought—That dress and diversion should not take up all our hours—That more time should not be spent in adorning our persons, than in improving our minds—That the beautified sepulchre should not be our exact resemblance, much show and ornament without, and within nothing but stench and rottenness—That barely to pass our time should not be all the account we make of it, but that some profit should be consulted as well as some delight.

§ 110. *On Pleasure.*

SECTION IV.

Again, no pleasure can be innocent, from which our health is a sufferer. You are no more to shorten your days, than *with one stroke to end them;* and we are suicides but in a different way, if wantonness and luxury be our gradual destruction, or despair our instant. It is self-murder, to take from our continuance here any part of that term, to which the due care of ourselves would have extended it; and our life, probably falls a more criminal sacrifice to our voluptuousness, than to our impatience.

When we throw off the load, which Providence has thought fit to lay upon us, we fail greatly in a proper deference to its wisdom, in a due submission to its will; but then we have to plead, sufferings too grievous to be sustained——a distress too mighty to be contended with; a plea, which can by no means justify us; yet how preferable to any, that he can allege, who, in the midst of all things that can give a relish to his being, neglects the preservation of it—who abuses the conveniences of life to its waste, and turns its very comforts to its ruin? or, could we suppose our pleasures disordering our constitution, after a manner not likely to contribute to its decay, they would not even then be exempted from guilt: to preserve yourself should not solely be your concern, but to maintain your most perfect state: every part and every power of your frame claims your regard; and it is great ingratitude towards him, who gave us our faculties, when we *in any wise* obstruct their free use. The proper thankfulness to God for our life is to be expressed by our care about it; both by keeping it, till he pleases to require it; and by so preserving it, that it may be fit for all those purposes, to which he has appointed it.

Further, the pleasure is, undoubtedly, criminal, which is not adapted to our fortune—which either impairs it, or hinders an application of it to what has the principal claim upon it. If actions, otherwise the most commendable, lose their merit, when they disqualify us for continuing them—if generosity changes its name, when it suits not our circumstances; and even alms are culpable, when by bestowing them we come to want them—if the very best uses, to which we can put our wealth, are not so to draw off, as to dry the stream; we can by no means suppose, that our amusements are not to be limited, as by other considerations, so by this in particular—the expense which they create: we cannot imagine, that the restraints should not lie upon our wantonness, which lie upon our beneficence.

Be our possessions the largest, it is but a very small part of them that we have to dispose of as we think fit, on what conduces solely to our mirth and diversion. Great affluence, whatever we may account it, is really but a greater trust; the means committed to us of a more extensive provision for the necessities of our fellow-creatures; and when our maintenance—our convenience—an appearance suitable to our rank have been consulted, all that remains is the claim of others, of our family, our friends, our neighbours, of those who are most in need of us, and whom we are most obliged to assist.

In the figure we make, in our attendants, table, habit, there may be a very culpable parsimony: but in the expense which has nothing but self-gratification in view, our thrift can never transgress: here our abstinence is the most generous and commendable, as it at once qualifies us to relieve the wants of others, and lessens our own—as it sets us above the world, at the time that it enables us to be a blessing to it.

There is not a nobler quality to distinguish us, than that of an indifference to ourselves—a readiness to forego our own liking for the ease and advantage of our fellow-creatures. And it is but justice, indeed, that the conveniences of many should prescribe to those of one: whatever his fortune may be, as he owes all the service he has from it to the concurrence of numbers, he ought to make it of benefit to them, and by no means to conclude, that what they are not to take from him, they are not to share.

Nor should it be unremarked, that the gratifications, best suited to nature, are of all the cheapest: she, like a wise parent, has not made those things needful to the well-being of any of us, which are prejudicial to the interests of the rest. We have a large field for enjoyment, at little or no charge, and may very allowably exceed the bounds of this; but we should always remember, that the verge of right is the entrance upon wrong—that the indulgence, which goes to the full extent of a lawful expense, approaches too near a criminal one, to be wholly clear from it.

Again, care should be taken that our pleasures be in character.

The *station* of some, the *profession* of others, and an *advanced age* in all, require that we should decline many pleasures allowable to those of an inferior rank—of a different profession—of much younger years.

Do your *decisions* constitute the *law*—does your *honour* balance the plebeian's *oath?* how very fitting is it that you should never be seen eager on trifles—intent on boyish sports—unbent to the lowest amusements of the populace—solicitous after gratifications, which may show, that neither your sagacity is greater, nor your scruples fewer than what are found in the very meanest of the community!

Am I set apart to recommend a reasonable and useful life—to represent the world as a scene of vanity and folly, and propose the things above as only proper to engage our affections? how ungraceful a figure do I then make, when I join in all the common amusements—when the world seems to delight *me* full as much as my hearers, and the only difference between us is, that their words and actions correspond, and mine are utterly inconsistent!

Have you attained the years, which extinguish the relish of many enjoyments—which bid you expect the speedy conclusion of the few remaining, and ought to instruct you in the emptiness of all those of the sensual kind? we expect you should leave them to such who can taste them better, and who know them less. The massy vestment ill becomes you, when you sink under its weight; the gay assembly, when your dim eyes cannot distinguish the persons composing it: your feet scarcely support you; attend not, therefore, where the contest is, whose motions are the gracefulest: fly the representation designed to raise the mirth of the spectators, when you can only remind them of their coffins.

Lastly, every pleasure should be avoided, that is an offence to the scrupulous, or a snare to the indiscreet. I ought to have nothing more at heart than my brother's innocence, except my own; and when there are so many ways of entertaining ourselves, which admit of no misconstruction, why should I choose such as afford occasion for any?

To be able greatly to benefit our fellow creatures is the happiness of few, but not to hurt them is in the power of all; and when we cannot do the world much good, we must be very unthinking indeed, if we endeavour not to do it the least possible mischief.

How this action will appear, to what interpretation it is liable, ought to be our consideration in whatever we engage. We are here so much interested in each other's morals, that, if we looked not beyond our present being, it should never be a point indifferent to us, what notions our conduct may propagate, and for what corruptions it may be made the plea: but professing the doctrine of *Christ* as our rule, we can in nothing more directly oppose it, than in taking those liberties, by which the virtue of any is endangered. Which of our pleasures have this pernicious tendency, it will be more proper for my readers to recollect, than for me to describe. To those who are in earnest I have said enough; to the insincere more would be fruitless. What has been said deserves, I think, some consideration, and that it may have a serious one, is the most earnest wish of,

Dear Sir,
Yours, &c.

§ 111. *Three Essays on the Employment of Time.*

PREFACE.

The *essays* I here publish, though at first penned for the benefit of some of the author's neighbours in the country, may, it is hoped, from the alterations since made in them, be of more general use. *The subject* of them is, in itself of the highest importance, and could, therefore never be unseasonably considered; but the general practice, at present, more especially entitles it to our notice. The principles on which *their argumentative part* proceeds, are denied by none whose conviction it consults. Such as regard the human frame as only in its mechanism excelling that of beasts——such as would deprive man's breast of social affections, exempt him from all apprehensions of a deity, and confine his hopes to his present existence, are not the *persons* whom any thing here said proposes to affect. They are not, I mean, directly applied to in this *work;* but even their benefit *it* may be said consequentially to intend, as *it* would certainly contribute thereto, could *it* properly operate on those whose advantage is its immediate aim.

We have been told, by very good judges of human nature, how engaging virtue would be, if it came under the notice of sense. And what is a right practice, but virtue made, in some measure, the object of our sense? What is a man ever acting reasonably, but, if I may so speak, impersonated virtue——Virtue in a visible shape, brought into view, presenting itself to the sight, and through the sight as much affecting the mind, as it could be affected by any elegance of form, by any of the beauties of colouring or proportion.

The notions most dishonourable to the *deity*, and to the *human species*, are often, I suspect, first taken up, and always, certainly, confirmed by remarking how they act whose speculations express the greatest honour towards *both*.

When the strongest sense of an all powerful and wise, a most holy and just Governor of the world, is professed by those who show not the least concern to please him——When reason, choice, civil obligations, a future recompense, have for their advocates such as are governed by humour, passion, appetite; or who deny themselves no present pleasure or advantage, for any thing that an hereafter promises; it naturally leads others, first, to think it of little moment which *side* is taken on these points, and then, to take *that* which suits the manners of them who, in their declarations, are *its* warmest opposers.

Whereas, were the *apprehensions* that do justice to a superintending providence——an immaterial principle in man——his liberty——his duties in society——his hopes at his dissolution, to be universally evidenced by a suitable practice; the great and manifest advantage arising from them would be capable of suppress-ing every *doubt* of their truth, would prevent the entrance of any, or would soon remove it.

As, indeed, all that we are capable of knowing in our present state, appears either immediately to regard its wants, or to be connected with what regards them, it is by no means a slight confirmation of the truth of a doctrine, that the persuasion thereof is of the utmost consequence to our present well being. And thus the great advantages that are in this life derivable from the belief of a future retribution——that are here the proper fruits of such a belief, may be considered as evidencing how well it is founded——how reasonably it is entertained. On this it may be of some use more largely to insist.

What engagements correspond to the conviction that the state in which we now are is but the passage to a better, is considered in the last of these essays: and that, when so engaged, we are acting the *part* befitting our nature and our situation, seems manifest both on account of the approbation it has from our calmest hours, our most serious deliberation and freest judgment, and likewise on account of the testimony it receives even from them who act a quite contrary one. What they conform not to, they applaud; they acknowledge their failures to be such; they admire the worth, which they cannot bring themselves to cultivate.

If we look into the writers who supposed all the pleasures of man to be those of his body, and all his views limited to his present existence; we find them, in the rule of life they gave, deserting the necessary consequences of their *supposition*, and prescribing a morality utterly inconsistent with *it*. Even when they taught that what was good or evil was to be determined by our feeling only——that right or wrong was according to the pleasure or pain that would ensue to us during the continuance of our present frame, since after its dissolution we have nothing to hope or fear; their practical directions were, however, that we ought to be strictly just, severely abstinent, true to our friendships, steady in the pursuit of honour and virtue, attentive to the public welfare, and willing to part with our lives in its defence.

Such they admitted man ought to be—such they exhorted him to be, and, therefore, when they would allow him to act only upon *motives* utterly incongruous to his being this person, it followed either that these were wrongly assigned, or that a conduct was required from him unsuitable to his nature.

That his obligations were rightly stated was on all hands agreed. The mistake was in the inducements alleged for discharging them. Nothing was more improbable than his fulfilling the duties this *scheme* appointed him, if he was determined by it in judging of the consequences of his actions————what good or hurt they would do him——what happiness or misery would be their result.

While the Epicureans admitted justice to be preferable to injustice ——a public spirit, to private selfish views; while they acknowledged it more fitting that we should sacrifice life to the good of our country, than preserve it by deserting the common welfare; they must, I think, be regarded as authorizing a preference of the principles which will make man just and public spirited, to those which will dispose him to be unjust, and wholly attentive to his own little interests.

Let us see, then, what will be the practical consequences of adopting or rejecting the *Epicurean* tenet of our having nothing to hope for beyond the grave.

The value we set on life is shown by what we do to preserve it, and what we suffer rather than part with it. We support ourselves by the hardest labour, the severest drudgery, and we think death a much greater evil, than to struggle for years with disease and pain, despairing of cure, and even of any long intervals of ease. Such, ordinarily, is our love of life. And this desire to keep it cannot but be greatly increased, when we are induced to think that once lost it is so for ever. To be without all hope of again enjoying the blessing we thus highly prize, must naturally disincline us to hazard it, and indispose us for what will endanger its continuance. He who is persuaded that *corporeal pleasure* is all he has to expect, and that *it* is confined to his present existence, must, *if he acts agreeably to such a persuasion*, be wholly intent on the pursuit of that pleasure, and dread nothing more than its coming to an end, or being interrupted. Hence, if his term of life would be shorter, or any greater distress would accrue to him by adhering to truth and justice, than by departing from them——if he were to be at present more a loser by assisting his friend, than by forsaking him——if he could promise himself a larger share of sensual gratifications from betraying his country, than from serving it faithfully, he would be false and unjust, he would be perfidious to his friend, and a traitor to his country. All those sentiments and actions that express an entire attachment to the *delights of sense*, and the strongest reluctance to forego *them*, are strictly in character when we look not beyond them——when we acknowledge not any higher *satisfactions*, and behold *these* as expiring with us, and sure never to be again tasted.

Whereas the prospect of a returning life, and of enjoyments in it far superior to any we now experience, or promise ourselves, has a necessary tendency to lessen our solicitude about the existence here appointed us. We cannot well be reconciled to the *loss* of our being, but are easily so to its *change;* and death considered as only its change, as the passage from a less to a more desirable state, will, certainly, have the terror of its appearance much abated. The conviction that there is a greater good in reserve for us than any pleasure which earth can afford, and that there is something far more to be feared by us than any pain we can now be made to suffer, will, in proportion to its strength, render us indifferent to the delights and conveniences of our abode on earth, and dispose us to qualify ourselves for obtaining that greater good, and avoiding that so much more to be dreaded evil. In these *considerations* of life and death, of happiness and misery, virtue has its proper support. We are by *them* brought to judge rightly of the part becoming us, and to adhere to it immoveably: *they* furnish sufficient inducements to avoid falsehood and injustice, of whatever immediate advantage we may be thereby deprived——*they* encourage us to serve our friends and country with the utmost fidelity, notwithstanding all the inconveniences that can be supposed to attend it——they are, indeed, proper incitements to prefer the public welfare to our own safety, while *they* represent to us how much our gain thereby would overbalance our loss.

Brutes in our end and expectations, how can we be otherwise in our pursuits? But if the reasoning principle in us be an incorruptible one, and its right or wrong application in its embodied state affect the whole of our future existence; we have, in that apprehension, the most powerful motive to act throughout in conformity to our rational nature, or, which is the same thing in other words, never to swerve from virtue ——to despise alike danger and pleasure when standing in competition with our duty.

Thus, when *Socrates*, in *Plato's Phædo*, has proved the immortality of our soul, he considers it as a necessary consequence of the belief thereof, " That we should be employed in the culture of our minds ——in such care of them as shall not only regard that term, to which we give the name of life, but the whole which follows it—in making ourselves as wise and good as may be, since on it our safety entirely depends, the soul carrying hence nothing with it, but its good or bad actions, its virtues or vices, and these constituting its happiness or misery to all eternity."

So, when the elder *Scipio* is introduced by *Tully*, apprising the younger, " That what is called our life, may be more properly styled our death—that we truly live when we are freed from the fetters of our body;" he proceeds to observe how much it then concerned him " to be just—to promote the public welfare —to make true glory his aim, doing what is right without regard to any advantage it will now yield him, despising popular opinion, adhering to virtue for its real worth." And the youth thus instructed, professes, " That after such information into what state he is to pass, he would not be wanting to himself; unmindful he had not been of his ancestor's worth, but to copy it should now be his more especial care, since encouraged thereto by so great a reward."

Lucan, representing the inhabitants of this part of Europe as persuaded that the soul survived the dissolution of the body, congratulates them, indeed, only on the happiness they enjoyed in an opinion that freed them from the most tormenting of all fears, the dread of death—that made them act with so much bravery and intrepidity. But when he admits a contempt of death to be the proper effect of this *opinion*, he must be considered as allowing it all that practical influence which as naturally results from it, as such as indifference to life doth, and has the same connexion with it.

If, therefore, the persuasion that death renders us utterly insensible, be a persuasion that unmans us quite —that disposes to a course of action most unworthy of us—that is extremely prejudicial to society, and tends, in every way, to our own greatest hurt or debasement, we may well suppose it an erroneous one; since it is in the highest degree improbable, that there should be any truth in a notion the reception of which so far operates to the prejudice of mankind—so necessarily contributes to introduce a general disorder.

On the other hand, if, from the conviction that there is a recompense for us beyond the grave, we derive sentiments most becoming us—if from it the worthiest actions proceed—if it be the source of the greatest both private and public good—if with it be connected the due discharge of our duty in the several relations in which we are placed—if it alone can lead us to perfect our nature, and can furnish our state with satisfactory enjoyments; there may seem sufficient grounds to conclude that there is such a recompense; the persuasion thereof, thus affecting us, may well appear most reasonably entertained.

When all those principles, of whose truth we have the greatest certainty, conduct us to happiness, it is natural to think that the influence of any principle upon our happiness, should be no improper test of its truth.

If there be no surer token of a right practice, than its tendency to promote the common good, can we but judge that to be a right opinion, which has undeniably, in an eminent degree, such a tendency?

When the difficulties that, under a general corruption, attend our adherence to virtue, are only to be surmounted by the prospect of future reward; one knows not how to believe that the proper inducement to our acting a part so becoming us—so much our praise, should be no other than a chimerical view, a romantic and utterly vain expectation.

When error is manifestly the cause of whatever ill we do or suffer, it is extremely improbable, that to an erroneous notion we must stand indebted for the best use of life, and its most solid satisfactions.

But it may be asked—where does this opinion produce these boasted effects? among them who profess it their firmest belief that there is a future recompense, how few do we find better men for it—more regular in their manners, or more useful to the world, than they would have been without any such persuasion?

How far any truth shall operate upon us—how far it shall influence us, depends upon our application of it, upon our attention to it. Experience furnishes the utmost certainty of a vast variety of *particulars* highly interesting our present welfare, which yet we overlook, we give ourselves little or no concern about, though we thereby make ourselves the severest sufferers; and may be almost as sure as we can be of any thing, that our unconcernedness about them must be attended with consequences thus fatal to us. The several rules which regard the lengthening of life—the preservation of health—the enjoyment of ease, though they carry with them the clearest evidence of their importance, how very little weight have they with the generality of mankind—how unheeded are they when opposing an eager appetite, a strong inclination! while yet these rules are acknowledged to remain as true, as worthy of our notice, as certain in their salutary effects when observed, as if all that practical regard to which they are entitled, was paid them; and we may be as justly thought endowed with a capacity of discovering those effects in order to their profiting us, as if they universally took place.

What benefit was intended in qualifying us for the discernment of any truth, is by no means to be inferred from what *ordinarily ensues* to us when discerning it. A just inference as to this can only be made from regarding the dictates of reason upon such a truth being discerned by us; or, what use of its discernment reason directs us to make.

When we are less wicked than very bad principles prompt us to be, which is often the case; these are, nevertheless, full as blameable as they would be if we were to act consistently with them. That they are not *pursued*, is, as to them, quite an accidental point; in reason and nature they should be; and therefore are fitly chargeable with all the consequences that acting according to them would produce.

So, on the other hand, though it must be confessed, that, with the best *principles*, our course of life is, frequently, very faulty; the objection must lie not to the nature or kind of their influence, but to a weakness of it, which is *our* crime, and not *their* defects. We will not let them act upon us; as they are qualified to do. Their worth is to be estimated by the worth they are suited to produce. And it would be full as absurd, when we will not mind our way, to deny that the light can be of any help to us in seeing it; as to deny the serviceableness of any principle, because we fail in its application.

Nor, is it, indeed, only our unhappiness that we are inattentive to what *the belief of a future recompense* requires from us; religion itself, is, alas! every where abused to the obstructing the proper effects of this belief. I mean, that whatever religion is any where professed, some or other rite or doctrine of it *does* favour, as in Paganism and Mohammedism; or *is so construed*, as in Judaism and Christianity, that *it is made* to favour a departure from the practice which suits the persuasion of a future reward. The reproach that belonged to the Jews in our Saviour's time, they have, as far as appears, deserved ever since; that by their scrupulous regard to the lesser points of their law, they think they make amends for the grossest neglect of its most important precepts. And with respect to us Christians,[*] whence is it, that there is so little virtue among us—that we are throughout so corrupt, but from taking sanctuary for our crimes in our very religion,—from perverting its most holy institutions and doctrines to be our full security whatsoever are our vices?[†]

Thus, we are either of a church in which we can be absolved of *all* our *sins;* or we are of the number of the elect, and cannot commit *any;* or the merits of Christ atone for our not having the merit even of honesty and sincerity; or a right faith makes amends for our most corrupt practice.[‡]

We have prayers, sacraments, fasts, that are never thought of to improve us in virtue, but to supply the want of it—to quiet our consciences under the most culpable gratifications of our lusts.

How the belief of a future recompense should, in reason, affect our practice—what its proper and natural influence is, solely concerns the present argument. It seems enough, in the case before us, that no one can be consistent with himself, but, if he has any hopes of happiness in another world, his conduct will be regular, becoming, rational: and, that where we find these hopes entertained on mature consideration, justly reasoned upon, duly attended to, there we certainly find great purity of morals, a strict regard to the part befitting a reasonable creature, and every other advantage ascribed to *them.* If I cannot be allowed to infer from hence that they are well founded, they have still for their support all those arguments in favour of a final retribution, with which I have not at all meddled, nor in the least weakened by any thing I may have less pertinently observed. The subject of the third of the following essays led me to the remarks here made; and to me they appear not immaterial. I cannot, indeed, bring myself to think but that the hopes which induce me to act most agreeably to my Creator's will, he has formed me to entertain; and will not let me be disappointed in them.

Of one thing I am sure, that they who suffer the persuasion of a future happiness to operate, as it ought, on their practice, constantly experience their practice adding strength to their persuasion; the better they become by their belief, the more confirmed they become in it. This is a great deal to say on its behalf. What weightier recommendation to our assent can any *doctrine* have, than that, as *it* tends to improve us in virtue, so the more virtuous we are, the more firmly we assent to *it;* or, the better judges we are of truth, the fuller assurance we have of *its* truth?

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[*] Sir *Isaac Newton* having observed, *That the prophecies concerning Christ's first coming were for setting up the Christian religion,* adds, *which all nations have since corrupted,* &c. Observ. upon the Proph. of Dan. *&c.* p. 252.

[†] The *general* and great *defect* in those that profess the Christian faith is, that they hope for life eternal, without performing those conditions, whereupon it is promised in the Gospel, namely, repentance and reformation.—They will trust to a *fruitless, lifeless faith*, or to some *penances,* and *satisfactions,* and *commutations* made with God, doing what he hath not required instead of what he hath commanded. No persuasions shall prevail to move and excite them to do this, no reasons, arguments, or demonstration, no, not the express words of God, that it is necessary to be done; or to forbear to censure them as *Enemies to the grace of God,* who do with clear and express Scripture show the absolute necessity of it. *Owtram's Sermons*, p. 166, 167.

[‡] I heartily wish, that by public authority it were so ordered, that no man should ever preach or print this doctrine, That Faith alone justifies, unless he joins this together with it, That universal obedience is necessary to salvation. *Chillingworth's Relig. of Prot.* p. 362.

By our zeal in our opinions we grow cool in our piety and practical duties. *Epist. Dedicat. prefixed to the Discourse of Liberty of Proph.*

§ 112. *On the Employment of Time.*

ESSAY THE FIRST.

"Amazing! that a creature, so warm in the pursuit of her pleasures, should never cast one thought towards her happiness."—A reflection this, made indeed by a comic writer, but not unworthy the most serious.

To be intent on pleasure, yet negligent of happiness, is to be careful for what will ease us a few moments of our life, and yet, without any regard to what will distress us for many years of it.

When I study my happiness, I consult the satisfaction of the whole continuance of my being—I endeavour, that throughout it I may suffer as little, and enjoy myself as much, as my nature and situation will admit. Happiness is lasting pleasure; its pursuit is, really, that of pleasure, with as small an allay as possible of pain. We cannot, therefore, provide for our happiness, without taking our share of pleasure; though, as is every where but too evident, our eagerness after Pleasure may plunge us into the misery we are unable to support.

Nothing, indeed, is more specious than the general term Pleasure. It carries with it the idea of something which must be permitted us by our Maker; since we know not how to suppose him forbidding us to taste what he has disposed us to relish. His having formed us to receive pleasure, is our license to take it. This I will admit to be true, under proper restrictions.

It is true, that from our nature and constitution we may collect wherein we act agreeably to our Creator's will, and wherein we act contrary to it; but the mischief is, we commonly mistake our nature, we miscall it; we call that it which is but a part of it, or the corruption of it; and we thence make conclusions, by which when we govern our practice, we soon find ourselves in great difficulties and distress.

For instance, we call our passions our nature; then infer, that, in gratifying them, we follow nature: and, being thus convinced that their gratification must be quite lawful, we allow ourselves in it, and are undone by it. Whereas, the body is as much the man, as his passions are his nature; a part of it, indeed, they are, but the lowest part: and which, if more regarded than the higher and nobler, it must be as fatal to us, as to be guided rather by what is agreeable to our appetite, than conducive to our health. Of this more hereafter.

The call of nature being the favourite topic of all the men of pleasure—of all who act the most in contradiction to nature, I will confine the whole of the following essay to the consideration of it, so far as it relates to the employment of our time: and show how our time should be employed, if we have a just regard to our nature—if what it requires be consulted by us.

That man is the work of a wise agent, is in the clearest manner discovered by the marks of wisdom, that show themselves in his frame—by the contrivance and skill, that each part of it expresses—by the exact proportion and suitable disposition, that the several parts of it have to each other, and by their respective fitness to promote the well-being of the whole.

When we must thus acknowledge the great wisdom exerted in our structure; when we are so capable of discerning its beauties and advantages, and so fully know their preservation and improvement to depend upon ourselves, upon our own endeavours, care, and pains: we cannot possibly be at a loss to discover what our wise Maker must, in this particular, expect from us. The duty of man is as certainly known from his nature—what he ought to do for himself is as fully understood from what he can do, as the uses of any machine are understood by a thorough acquaintance with its powers.

I can no more doubt for what I am intended—what must be required of me, when I see plainly what I am able to effect; than I can question for what purposes a watch or a clock is designed, when I am duly apprised how the different parts of it act upon each other, to what they all concur, and to what only.

We want no reasoning to convince us, that a frame so curious as the human, must be made in order to its continuance, as long as the materials composing it will admit; and that we ourselves must give it such continuance: how this is shortened, how it is prolonged, we are likewise all of us fully sensible. There is no man but perceives what will hasten his dissolution, and what will probably retard it; by what management of himself he is sure to pass but few years in the world; and by what he is likely to be upheld in it for many. Here then our rule is obvious; these notices afforded us to make it so: when we are taught, that the support of our life must be agreeable to him from whom we received it, and that *we* are appointed to give it this support, that it must come from *ourselves*, from what *we* do in order to it; we are at the same time instructed to regard all things contributing to it as enjoined us, and all things detrimental to, and inconsistent with it, as forbidden us; we have it suggested to us, that we are properly employed, when we consult the due preservation of life, and that the engagements are improper, are blameable, that hinder it.

Thus, to spend our time well, we must give our bodies such exercise, such rest, and other refreshments, as their subsistence demands; and we mis-spend it, when we are lazy and slothful, when we are less sober, chaste, and temperate; when we proceed to excesses of any kind, when we let our passions and appetites direct us: every thing in this way tends to hasten our dissolution; and therefore must be criminal, as opposing that continuance here, which our very composition shows our Maker to have designed us.

But that our frame should be barely upheld, cannot be all we are to do for it; we must preserve it in its most perfect state, in a state in which its several powers can be best exerted.

To take this care about it, is evidently required of us. Any unfitness for the functions of life is a partial death. I don't see of what we can well be more certain, than that all the health and strength, of which our constitution admits, were intended us in it; and they must, therefore, be as becoming our concern, as it is to hinder the ruin of our constitution: we know not how sufficiently to lament the loss of them, even from the advantage of which they are to us in themselves, not only from their preventing the uneasiness, the pains, and the numerous inconveniences with which the sickly and infirm have to struggle, but likewise from the satisfaction they give us in our being, from what we feel, when our blood flows regularly, our nerves have their due tone, and our vigour is entire.

Yet these are but the least of the benefits we have from them.

We consist of two parts, of two very different parts; the one inert, passive, utterly incapable of directing itself, barely ministerial to the other, moved, animated by it. When our body has its full health and strength, the mind is so far assisted thereby, that it can bear a closer and longer application, our apprehension is readier, our imagination is livelier, we can better enlarge our compass of thought, we can examine our perceptions more strictly, and compare them more exactly; by which means we are enabled to form a truer judgment of things—to remove more effectually the mistakes into which we have been led by a wrong education, by passion, inattention, custom, example—to have a clearer view of what is best for us, of what is most for our interest, and thence determine ourselves more readily to its pursuit, and persist therein with greater resolution and steadiness.

The soundness of the body can be thus serviceable to the *mind*, and when made so, may in its turn be as much profited by *it*. The poet's observation is no less true of them, than it is of nature and art, each wants, each helps the other;

> "Mutually they need each other's aid."
> *Roscom.*

The mind, when not restrained by any thing deficient in its companion, and having from it all the assistance it is adapted to afford, can with much greater facility prevent that discomposure and trouble, by which our bodily *health* is ever injured, and preserve in us that quiet and peace, by which *it* is always promoted. Hence we are to conclude, that we should forbear, not only what necessarily brings on disease and decay, but whatever contributes to enfeeble and enervate us; not only what has a direct tendency to hasten our end, but likewise what lessens our activity, what abates of our vigour and spirit.—That we should also avoid whatever is in any wise prejudicial to a due consideration of things, and a right judgment of them; whatever can hinder the understanding from properly informing itself, and the will from a ready compliance with its directions. We must be intent on such a discipline of ourselves as will procure us the fullest use of our frame, as will capacitate us to receive from it the whole of the advantage it is capable of yielding us; so exercising the members of our body, consulting its conveniences, supplying its wants, that it may be the least burthensome to us, may give us the least uneasiness——that none of its motions may, through any fault of ours, be obstructed, none of its parts injured——that it may be kept in as unimpaired, as athletic a state as our endeavours can procure, and all its functions performed with the utmost exactness and readiness; so guarding, likewise, against the impressions of sense, and delusiveness of fancy, so composing our minds, purifying them, divesting them of all corrupt prejudices, that they may be in a disposition equally favourable to them, and to our bodies—that they may not be betrayed into mistakes dangerous to the welfare of either—that they may be in a condition to discern what is becoming us, what is fittest for us; desirous of discovering it, and preparing to be influenced by it.

We are thus to seek our most perfect state, such as allows us the freest use of our several powers a full liberty *for the due application of them.* And the ability thus to apply them, must be in order to our doing it, to our receiving from them whatever service they can effect.

As what is corporeal in us is of least excellence and value, our care in general about it, should bear a proportion to the little worth it has in itself—should chiefly regard the reference it has to our understanding, the assistance that it may afford our intellectual faculties.

Merely to preserve our being—to possess our members entire——to have our senses perfect——to be free from pain——to enjoy health, strength, beauty, are but very low aims for human creatures. The most perfect state of animal life can never becomingly engross the concern of a rational nature: fitted for much nobler and worthier attainments, we are by that fitness for them called to pursue them.

Ask those of either sex, who rate highest the recommendation of features, complexion, and shape——who are most intent on adorning their persons——who study most the accomplishments of an outward appearance; ask them, I say, which they think their chief endowment, and what it is that does them the highest honour? You will find them with one consent pronouncing it *their reason*. With all their folly they will not defend it as such; with their little sense, they will prefer that little to their every other fancied perfection. The finest woman in the world would rather make deformity her choice than idiocy, would rather have ugliness than incapacity her reproach.

Thus, likewise, whom do we perceive so fond of life, so desirous of reaching its longest term, that he would be willing to survive his understanding; that he would choose to live after he ceased to reason? The health and ease, the vigour and cheerfulness that are often the lunatic's portion, would not induce the most infirm, sickly, and complaining among us, to wish himself in his stead; to wish an exchange of his own distempered body, for the other's disordered mind.

Nor does the mind only claim our chief regard, as it is thus universally acknowledged, and as it really is the principal, the most excellent, the presiding part of us, but as our well-being is necessarily connected with giving it this preference, with bestowing the most of our care and pains upon it.

What is best for the body, what is best for the whole man, can only be discovered and provided for, by our rational faculties, by them assiduously cultivated, diligently exerted, and thence strengthened and enlarged.

Our well being wholly depends upon the sufficient information of our understanding, upon the light in which we see things, upon the knowledge we have how far they can profit or hurt us, how the benefit they can be of to us may be derived from them, and how the hurt they can do us may be escaped.

If I think that to be good, or that to be evil, which is not such———or if I know not that to be good, or that to be evil, which is really such——or if I think there is more or less good, or more or less evil in any thing than there really is———or if what, by a proper application, might be made of very great advantage to me, I am ignorant how to make of any, or of as much as it would yield me—or if I am ignorant how to render that very little, or not at all, hurtful to me, which might have its evil either greatly lessened or wholly avoided: in all these instances, my well being must of necessity be a sufferer; my ignorance must greatly abate of the satisfaction of my life, and heighten its uneasiness.

No one is prejudiced by his not desiring what he conceives to be good, by his disinclination towards it, by his unwillingness to embrace it. So far is this from being our case, that we are always pursuing it. The source of all our motions, the design of all our endeavours is to better ourselves, to remove from us that which is really, or comparatively evil.

What alone hurts us is our misapprehension of good, our mistakes about, our ignorance of, it. Let us fully understand it——have just conceptions of it, we then shall never deserve the blame of its being less earnestly sought after, and therefore unattained by us. The excess of our earnestness after it, is, indeed, usually the occasion of missing it. Our solicitude, our eagerness and impatience are here so great, that they won't allow us time to examine appearances——to distinguish between them and realities———to weigh what is future against what is present——to deliberate whether we do not forego a much greater advantage hereafter, by closing with that which immediately offers; or shall not have it abundantly overbalanced, by its mischievous consequences.

We want not to be put on the pursuit of happiness, but we want very much to have that pursuit rightly directed; and as this must be done by the improvement of our rational powers, we can be interested in nothing more than in improving them, than in such an application of them, as will contribute most to perfect them.

We are so placed, that there are very few of the *objects* surrounding us, which may not be serviceable or hurtful to us; nor is that service to be obtained, or detriment avoided, otherwise than by our acquaintance with *them* and with ourselves; the more exact our knowledge of this kind is, the more we lessen the calamities, and add to the comforts of life: and it certainly must be as much the intention of our Creator, that we should attain the *utmost* good which we are capable of procuring ourselves, as that we should attain *any* for which he has qualified us.

Nor is the benefit arising to us from an enlarged understanding, rendered less certain, by the uneasiness that we find to be the share of the studious, the contemplative, and learned—of them whose intellectual attainments we chiefly admire.

The philosopher's observation to his friend on *books*, that it signifies nothing *how many*, but *what* he had, is applicable to the knowledge they communicate; what it is, and not how various is the thing that concerns us. It may extend to a prodigious number of particulars of no moment, or of very little; and that extent of it gain us all the extravagance of applause, though we have the ignorance of the vulgar, where it must be of the worst consequence.

Crowding our memory is no more improving our understanding, than filling our coffers with pebbles is enriching ourselves:* and what is commonly the name of learning, what usually denominates us *very learned* is, really, no more than our memory heavily and uselessly burthened.

How high is the desert, in the more eastern parts, of him who can but read and write the language of his country? A life spent in the study of *it alone* shall be there judged an exercise of reason most worthy of applause. And are we in these so enlightened regions, in this school of science, as we are apt to fancy it, at all more just to rational improvements? we have, indeed, no encomiums for him who is not at a loss for the meaning of any word that his native tongue furnishes; but he who is well skilled in two or three ancient ones, will have the highest applause for that skill, and be considered as among them, who have distinguished themselves, by a right application of their capacities. In this number we, likewise, generally agree to place such as have passed years in only qualifying themselves either to cavil and dispute, or to disguise their ignorance on any subject, or to colour strongly, and command the passions of their hearers. We are equally favourable to them, who busy their minds on discoveries that have no foundation but in fancy and credulity——or whose whole endeavour it has been to learn what this or that man has determined on a point, wherein he was as ill qualified as themselves to make a right determination,——or who amuse themselves with theories, with trifling and vain speculations.

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* There is nothing almost has done more harm to men dedicated to letters, than giving the name of study to reading, and making a man of great reading to be the same with a man of great knowledge. *Locke, of the Conduct of the Understanding.*

Let a just allowance be made for these and such like persons, whose reputation for learning is only built on the generality miscalling it, on the prevailing mistakes about it, and who have really hurt their understandings by what is thus falsely esteemed improving them; we shall have proceeded a great way in removing the objection to the pursuit of knowledge, from the little service it is of, to such whose attainments in it we concur in acknowledging and admiring.

When our intellectual pursuits *are* useful, they are often limited to what is of least use. How few of us are prompted to our researches from the consideration of the degree or extent of the good derivable from them? It is humour, fancy, or sordid gain alone, that ordinarily gives rise to the very inquiries which are of advantage to the world; they seldom are made from a regard to their proper worth, from the influence they can have upon our own or others' happiness.

That the better our understanding is informed, the better it can direct us, must be as evident to all, as that we want to be directed by it. The mind of man is as much assisted by knowledge, as his eye by light. Whatever his intellectual powers may be in themselves, they are to him according to his application of them: as the advantage he receives from his sight is according to the use he makes of it. That ignorance of his good which he might, but will not, remove, deprives him of it as certainly as an utter inability to acquaint himself with it.

In what is the improvement of our understandings, we may, indeed, be mistaken, as we may in what constitutes our true happiness; but in each case we must be wilfully so, we must be so by refusing to attend, to consider.

Could we by instinct discover our own good, as the brute distinguishes its good, all concern on our part to increase our discernment might be needless; but the endeavour after this must be in the highest degree necessary, when the more clearly we discern things, the more we are benefited, and the less hurt by them. Where is the man who is not made happier by inquiries that are rightly directed, and when he can say with the poet,

> The search of truth
> And moral decency hath fill'd my breast;
> Hath every thought and faculty possest?

Of knowledge as distinct from true wisdom, it may be not unjustly observed, that the increase of it is only the increase of sorrow; but of that knowledge, the pursuit of which expresses our wisdom, we may confidently assert, that our satisfaction must advance with it. All will admit it a proof of wisdom, to judge rightly of what is most for our interest, and take such measures as suit it: and as we are qualified for this by our knowledge, by the knowledge of our own nature, and of the properties of the things without us, so far as they can contribute to our better or worse state; in the degree we are thus knowing we can only be wise, determine rightly of what is best, and use the fittest means to procure it. Attainments that serve not to this purpose may be slighted; but for such as are requisite to it, if they principally deserve not *our concern*, I see not what can have any title to it.*

We are, indeed, startled at the very terms, of deliberating, weighing, considering, comparing; we have affixed such ideas to them, to make them appear rather hindering the true enjoyment of ourselves than promoting it: but if we would not share the uneasiness that so many of our fellow-creatures lament, we must not adopt their prejudices. In every point of consequence we use more or less consideration; and in all the pleasures that allure, in all the trifles that amuse us, we are still making comparisons, preferring one to the other, pronouncing this less, and that more worthy of our choice. Though none, if the philosopher may be believed, deliberate on the whole of life, all do on the parts of it: and if we fail not to compare and reason upon our *lower* enjoyments, I see not what there can be forbidding in the advice to attend seriously, to examine fairly, and to delay our choice till we have gained the instruction requisite to determine it, when the object thereof is what can be *most* for our ease and satisfaction.

But it is not, perhaps, all exercise of our reason, in a way so well deserving it, that disgusts us; it is *the degree* of application required from us, that we relish not.

1. We know not how to be reconciled to so much trouble about enlarging our discernment, and refining our judgment.

2. We do not see how such a task can suit them whose whole provision for the day is from the labour of it.

3. We find no small part of mankind so easy under their ignorance and mistakes, that they will not advance a step to remove them: and what greater recommendation can there be of any situation, than that they who are in it are entirely satisfied with it?

1. The pains that we are to take in order to an advantage that must infinitely overbalance them, we can have no excuse for omitting: and we are called to no pains for the improvement of our reason, but such as cannot be declined without lessening our happiness—without incurring some evil we should otherwise have escaped, or wanting some good we should otherwise have obtained: whatever has its neglect attended with these consequences, must be expected from us.†

2. That they are to seek knowledge who are to get their bread, might seem a harsh lesson, if the endeavour to inform, hindered that to maintain themselves; if the *knowledge* they were to seek was any other but *of what is best for them*, of what can give them all the happiness that

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* Since our faculties plainly discover to us the being of a God, and the knowledge of ourselves, enough to lead us into a full and clear discovery of our duty, and great concernment; it will become us, as rational creatures, to employ those faculties we have, about what they are most adapted to, and follow the direction of nature, where it seems to point us out the way. For it is rational to conclude that our proper employment lies in those inquiries, and in that sort of knowledge which is most suited to our natural capacities, and carries in it our greatest interest, the condition of our eternal state. Hence, I think, I may conclude, that morality is the proper science and business of mankind in general. *Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding.*

† How men, whose plentiful fortunes allow them leisure to improve their understandings, can satisfy themselves with a lazy ignorance, I cannot tell: but methinks they have a low opinion of their souls, who lay out all their incomes in provision for the body, and employ none of it to procure the means and helps of knowledge; who take great care to appear always in a neat and splendid outside, and would think themselves miserable in coarse clothes, or a patched coat, and yet contentedly suffer their minds to appear abroad in a pie-bald livery of coarse patches, and borrowed shreds, such as it has pleased chance or their country tailor (I mean the common opinion of those they have conversed with) to clothe them in. I will not here mention how unreasonable this is for men that ever think of a future state, and their concernment in it, which no rational man can avoid to do sometimes. *Locke's Essay on Human Understanding*, B. iv. Ch. 20.

creatures so constituted can receive. For *this* every one must have leisure;* it should be judged our chief business; it directs us to that very employment from which we have our support—is carried on with it—assists us in it—gives it every consideration that can make it easy and satisfactory to us. The peasant or mechanic is not advised to spend fewer hours at labour, that he may have more for study, for reading, and contemplating—to leave his spade or his tools for a pen or a book. No, the advice to him is, observe what passes, and what good or hurt accompanies or follows it.

Remark what it is that pleases you only for a few moments, and then either brings immediate uneasiness, or lays a foundation for some future.

You find several things of service to you, observe which is of most, which has no sort of inconvenience attending it, or very little in comparison of its advantage; and, if there are none of them without some inconveniences, which has the fewest—which does you good in a higher degree, or for a longer term.

You are continually with those of the same nature with yourself; take notice what is serviceable or prejudicial to them; you may learn from their experience what your own teaches you not. Every day will furnish some or other occurrence that may be a profitable lesson to you, make it such; overlook nothing that affects your well-being; attend chiefly to what concerns it.

Go over frequently in your thoughts the observations you have made on what will more or less benefit you; let them be so deeply imprinted upon your mind, make them so familiar to yourself, that the offer of a less good may never surprise and betray you into the neglect, and, by that means, the loss of a greater.

You are at all times at liberty to consider your own nature, be acquainted with it, see what you can do for yourself, what share of your happiness has no dependence on the things without you; what blessings may be secured to you by your own dispositions.

You necessarily shun evil: don't mistake it; be sure of what is so; be apprised of the degrees of it; be thoroughly instructed in these, that a desire to escape what you could easily bear, may never occasion you a distress which you would pronounce insupportable. Endeavour to inform yourself what evil you cannot too industriously avoid—what you should readily submit to—what you may change into good.

He, to whose situation terms like these would be unsuitable, must have *reason to* seek, as well as a *livelihood.* Our natural understanding fits all of us for a task like this; nor can it be inconsistent with any the hardest labour to which our support will oblige us.

The whole of this so severe a lesson is this brief one; do your best for yourself; be as happy as the right use of the abilities God has given you can make you.

3. As for the unconcernedness of so great a part of our species at their ignorance and errors—the entire

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* Are the greatest part of mankind, by the necessity of their condition, subjected to unavoidable ignorance in those things which are of greatest importance to them? have the bulk of mankind no other guide but accident and blind chance, to conduct them to their happiness or misery?—God has furnished men with faculties sufficient to direct them in the way they should take, if they will but seriously employ them that way, when their ordinary vocations allow them the leisure. No man is so wholly taken up with the attendance on the means of living, as to have no spare time to think at all of his soul, and inform himself in matters of Religion. Were men as intent on this, as they are on things of lower concernment, there are none so enslaved to the necessities of life, who might not find many vacancies that might be husbanded to this advantage of their knowledge. *Locke's Essay on Human Understanding.*

satisfaction they express under them: with regard to this, let it be considered, that we are no more to judge of good from the practice of numbers, than of truth from their opinions.

They thoroughly enjoy themselves, you say, with their little knowledge, and many mistakes.

And are any of us in our younger years better pleased than when we are suffered to sport away our time—to pass it without the least control and instruction? but because we are thus pleased, are we rightly so? could worse befal us, than to be permitted to continue thus agreeably unrestrained and uninstructed?

The man in a lethargy desires you would let him dose on: he apprehends no danger, when you see the greatest: you grieve and vex him, when you attempt to cure him.

Does any one who has more sense than the bulk of his fellow-creatures, wish for their dulness, that he might share their diversions—wish for their thoughtlessness, that he might join in their mirth?

Could the neglect of our rational faculties be accompanied, throughout our continuance in being, with the satisfaction at present expressed by so many under it, this indeed might be something in its favour; but this is by no means the case. He who gave us these faculties, and the ability to improve them, must intend that we should improve them: by frustrating his intention, we incur his displeasure; if we incur it, we may justly expect, sooner or later, to feel the effects thereof.

Nor is it to be thought that the neglect of our reason is, from the good we hereby forego, its own sufficient punishment, and therefore not likely to expose us to any other. We cannot rightly think thus, because of the extensive mischief occasioned by this neglect. It is very far from terminating in ourselves, from making us the only sufferers. Were it so confined, some pretence there might be for considering our mere crime as our ample punishment. But such it cannot appear, when it does infinite hurt to others—to our neighbourhood—to our friends—to our family—to the whole community of which we are members.

What is enough for myself, what I can do without, should be the least of my concern. My duty is to reflect what I can do for others; how I may make myself of greatest use. We stand all largely indebted to our fellow-creatures; and, owing them so much, if we neglect to qualify ourselves for serving them, we greatly injure them. But as this is not the place for pursuing these reflections, I will now only remark, of what deplorable consequence it is to our children (whose title to our endeavours for their benefit, all acknowledge) that the culture of our minds is so little our care—that we slight the rational improvements, with a capacity for which our Creator has so graciously favoured us.

Unapprehensive of the mischief our offspring must necessarily receive from our sloth, our intemperance, and other criminal gratifications, we impair their frame before it is yet completed; we entail on them misery, before we give them life.

Their reason seems to be watched in its appearance, only that it may be applied to for its speedier corruption. Every thing they are at first taught to value, is what they cannot enough despise; and all the pains that should be taken to keep their minds from vain fears, are employed to introduce them.

The chief of what our memory receives in our childhood, is what our maturer age most wishes to forget.

While we are ignorant how hurtful it is to be governed by our passions, our wise directors permit them to govern us, and thereby give them a strength which we afterwards fruitlessly lament and oppose. To save our tears, we are to have our will; and, for a few moments of present quiet, be condemned to years of distress. Imaginary evils we are bid to regard as the principal real ones; and what we should most avoid, we are, by examples of greatest weight with us, encouraged to practise.

How much indeed both the bodies and minds of children suffer from the ill-informed understanding of their parents, is scarcely to be conceived—what advantages they lose by it—what misery they feel: and therefore, as they are the immediate objects of our care—as nature has made them such, and all the prejudice they receive from any failure of ours, from any neglect on our part in qualifying ourselves to assist them in the way we ought to do it, is really an injury done them by us; we cannot think, that if we won't endeavour to have just notions of things, we are sufficiently punished by being without them—we can, with no probability, suppose, that, if we are content to be losers ourselves, it will be satisfaction enough for any distress that our carelessness or supineness brings on others, even on them whose welfare we ought most to consult.

Of what advantage it is to both sexes that *the parent*, under whose guidance they are in their tender years, should not have confined her thoughts to the recommendations of apparel, furniture, equipage—to the amusements in fashion—to the forms of good breeding—to the low topics of female conversation, we have the most remarkable instances in the family of *Emilia*. She has for many years been the wife of one, whose rank is the least part of his merit: made by him the mother of a numerous offspring, and having from his important and uninterrupted avocations, their education left entirely to her, till they were qualified for a more extensive instruction; it was her study how she might be of the greatest use to them: they were ever under her eye: her attention to forming their manners could be diverted by none of the pleasures, by none of the engagements that claim so many of the hours of a woman of quality. She did not awe, but reason her children into their duty; they showed themselves to practise it not from constraint, but conviction. When they were absent from her—when they were in company, where they might have been as free as they pleased, I have, with astonishment, observed them as much influenced by what their wise mother had advised, as they could have been by any thing she would have said had she been present. In her conversation with them she was perpetually inculcating useful truths; she talked them into more knowledge, by the time that they were six or seven years old, than is usually attained at, perhaps, twice that age.

Let me indulge my imagination, and, by its aid, give a sample of her instructions; first to one of the females of her family, and then, to one of the males. *Leonora*, her eldest daughter, has, among her many accomplishments, great skill in painting. When her mother and she stood viewing the pictures, that crowded each side of the room in which they were, *Emilia* desired to hear what the pupil of so eminent a master had to observe on the works before them. *Leonora* began; praised the bold and animated manner in this piece, the softness and delicacy of that. Nothing could be more graceful than the attitude of this figure; the expression in that was so happy, the colouring so beautiful, that one might truly say of it, to make it alive, speech alone is wanted; nor would you think even that wanting, were you to trust wholly to your eyes. Here she admired the skilful distribution of light and shade: there the perspective was so wonderfully exact, that in the great number of objects presented to the eye, it could fix on none but what had its proper place, and just dimensions. How free is that drapery? what a variety is there in it, yet how well adjusted is the whole to the several figures in the piece? does not that group extremely please your ladyship? the disposition is quite fine, the association of the figures admirable; I know not which you could pitch upon to have absent or altered. *Leonora* pursuing this strain, *Emilia* interrupted her: have we nothing, child, but exactness here? is every thing before us quite finished and faultless? you will be pleased, madam, to reflect on what you have so often inculcated, That one would always choose to be sparing in censure, and liberal of praise—that commendation, freely bestowed on what deserves it, credits alike our temper and our understanding.

This I would have you never forget. But I'm here a learner; in that light you are now to consider me; and as your French master taught you pronunciation, not only by using a right, but by imitating your wrong one; making you by that means more sensible where the difference lay; so to qualify me for a judge in painting, it will not suffice to tell me where the artist has succeeded, if you observe not, likewise, where he has miscarried.

Leonora then proceeded to show where the drawing was incorrect—the attitude ungraceful—the *costume* ill presumed—the ordonnance irregular—the contours harsh—the light too strong—the shade too deep; extending her remarks in this way to a great number of pieces in the collection. You have been thus far, interposed *Emilia*, my instructor, let me now be yours. Suppose your own portrait here. In the same manner that you would examine it, judge of the original. This *you* ought to do, since it will be done by *others*; and the more blemishes *you* discover, the fewer you will probably leave for *them* to reproach you with. The faults in the picture may be known to him who drew it, and yet be suffered to appear from his inability to correct them; but when you discern what is faulty in yourself, if you cannot amend, you can, often, conceal it. Here you have the advantage of the painter; in another respect he has it greatly of you. Not one in a thousand is a judge of the *failures* in his performance; and therefore even when *many* may be objected to him, he shall pass, in common esteem, for an excellent artist. But let the woman, unconscious of her imperfections, be at no pains to remedy or hide them, all who converse with her are judges of them; when she permits them to be seen, they are certain to be censured.

You have sufficiently convinced me, to how many things the painter must attend—against what various mistakes he has to guard: each of your criticisms on him may be a lesson to yourself; every blemish or beauty in any part of his works has something correspondent to it in human life.

The design is faulty, not only when the end we propose to ourselves is confessedly criminal, but when it is low and mean; when, likewise, we let our time pass at random without any concern for what reason and duty require, but as caprice, or humour, or passion suggests.

We offend against proportion, when we arrogate to ourselves the desert we want, or over-rate what may be allowed us—when we hate not what is really evil; or when our affections are placed on what is not our proper good. You remember the dissection of a female heart in the *Spectator;* I refer you to it, that I may spare my own reflections, on what would furnish copious matter for no very pleasing ones.

Your ladyship will pardon me for interrupting you; but I can't help thinking, that the head and heart of a beau or country 'squire would furnish as much folly and corruption, as the head and heart of any woman in the kingdom.

We shall never, child, become better, by thinking who are worse than ourselves. If the charge upon us be just, we should consider how to get clear of it, and not who are liable to one equally reproachful. Were I to bid you wash your face, would you think yourself justified in not doing it, because you could show me a woman of rank with a dirtier? But to the purpose.

That expression, any failure in which you would, as a judge of painting, treat without mercy, is, in morals, violated by whatever is out of character. All inconsistency in practice—in profession and practice; every thing unbecoming your sex—your education—your capacity—your station, deserves the same censure that the pencil meets with, when it errs in expression.

Skill in the distribution of light and shade, or the *clair-obscure*, as, I think, the term of art is, I should apprehend resembled by prudence; which teaches us to show ourselves in the most advantageous point of view—brings forward and brightens our good qualities, but throws back and obscures our defects—suffers nothing to distinguish itself that will be to our disparagement, nor shades any thing that will credit us.

By *ordonnance* is meant, I apprehend, the manner of placing the several objects in a piece, or the disposition of them with respect to the whole composure. And what can be fitter for us, than to consider where we are, and to appear accordingly? The civilities that are less decently shown in the church, it would be a great indecorum to neglect in the drawing-room. The freedom that will gain you the hearts of your inferiors, shall, if used towards those of a higher rank, make you be thought the worst-bred woman in the world. Let the season for it be disregarded, your cheerfulness shall be offensive, your gravity seem ridiculous, your wit bring your sense into question, and your very friendliest interposition be thought not so much a proof of your affection as of your impertinence. Tis the right placing of things that shows our discretion—that keeps us clear of difficulties—that raises our credit—that principally contributes to give any of our designs success.

To beauty in colouring corresponds, perhaps, good nature improved by good breeding. And, certainly, as the canvass could furnish no design so well fancied, no draught so correct, but what would yet fail to please, and would even disgust you, were the colours of it ill-united—not sustained by each other—void of their due harmony; so both sense and virtue go but a little way in our recommendation, if they appear not to their proper advantage in an easiness of behaviour—in soft and gentle manners, and with all the graces of affability, courtesy, and complaisance. I see, by your smiling, you are satisfied you cannot be accused of being a bad colourist. Believe me, you have then gained a very material point; and the more concerns you have in the world, the more proofs you will find of its importance. I'll drop this subject when I have said to you, that if to make a good picture is such a complicated task, requires so much attention, such extensive observation—if an error in any of the principal parts of painting so offends, takes off so greatly from the merit of the piece——if he, who is truly an artist, overlooks nothing that would be at all a blemish to his performance, and would call each trivial indecorum a fault, think, child, what care about the original ought to equal this for the portrait—of what infinitely greater consequence it must be, to have every thing right within ourselves, than to give a just appearance to the things without us; and how much less pardonably any violation of decorum would be charged on your life, than on your pencil.

The most finished representation only pleases by its correspondence to what it represents, as nature well imitated; and if justness in mere representation and imitation can have the charms you find in it, you may easily conceive the still greater delight that must arise from beholding the beauties of nature itself; such, particularly, as the pencil cannot imitate—the beauties of rational nature, those which the possessor gives herself—which are of ten thousand times the moment of any in her outward symmetry—which, how highly soever they may adorn her, profit her still more, and are not only to her own advantage, but to that of the age in which she lives, and possibly, of remotest generations.

My concern to see you this fair unblemished original makes me strangely unmindful on what topic I am got. There, surely, can be no proof wanting, how much a wise and good woman excels any portrait or any woman, who has but the merit of a portrait, a fine appearance.

In this way *Emilia* takes each opportunity to form the manners of her daughter—to give her throughout just and reasonable sentiments, and dispose her to the exact discharge of her duty in every relation.

Leonora, thus educated, has the fools and the follies of the age in their due contempt—judges wisely—acts prudently—is ever usefully or innocently employed—can pass her evenings very cheerfully without a card in her hand—can be perfectly in humour when she is at home, and all her acquaintance at the assembly; and seems likely to borrow no credit from her family, which she will not fully repay.

We will dismiss the daughter, and represent *Emilia* parting with her son in terms like these. I am now to take my leave of you, for one campaign at least. It is the first you ever served; let me advise, and do you act, as if it would be your last; the dangers, to which you will be exposed, give both of us reason to fear it: if it please God that it should be so, may you not be found unprepared, nor I unresigned! This I am the less likely to be, when *you* have had *my* best counsel, and *I your* promise to reflect upon it. He bowing, and assuring her, that whatever she should be pleased to say to him, it would be carefully remembered; she proceeded—I could never conceive, what induced the soldier to think that he might take greater liberties than the rest of mankind. He is, 'tis true, occasionally subjected to greater hardships, and he runs greater hazards; but by a lewd and vicious life, he makes these hardships abundantly more grievous than they otherwise would be—he disqualifies himself to bear them. What would you think of his wits, who, because he is to be much in the cold, sits, as often as he can, close to the fire? An habitual sobriety and regularity of manners is, certainly, the best preservative of that vigorous constitution, which makes it least uneasy to endure fatigue and cold, hunger and thirst.

The dangers to which the soldier is exposed, are so far from excusing his licentiousness, when he has no enemy near him, that they ought to be considered as the strongest motive to conform himself, at all times, to the rules of reason and religion. A practice agreeable to them is the best support of his spirits, and the surest provision for his safety—it will effectually remove his fears, and can alone encourage his hopes: nothing but it can give him any comfortable expectation, if what threatens him should befal him. He who is so much in danger, ought to be properly *armed* against it, and this he can never be by reflecting on the women he has corrupted—on his hours of intemperance, or on any other of his extravagances. You won't, perhaps, allow that he wants the *armour* I would provide him, because he never knows the apprehensions that require it. But I am considering what his apprehensions ought to be, not what they are. The nature of things will not be altered by our opinion about them.

It is granted, that a soldier's life is, frequently, in the utmost *hazard;* and the question is not, how a thoughtless, stupid, absurd creature should behave in such a situation; but, what should be done in it by a man of prudence and sense? I say, he will attend to the value of what he *hazards*—to the consequence of its loss; and, if found of very great, he will so act, that the loss thereof may be, if possible, some or other way made up to him, or accompanied with the fewest inconveniences. Insensibility of danger is the merit of a bull-dog. True courage sees danger, but despises it only from rational motives—from the considerations of duty. There can be no virtue in exposing life, where there is no notion of its value; you are a brave man, when you fully understand its worth, and yet in a good cause disregard death.

If, thus to be ready to die is commendable, wholly from the cause that makes us so, which is, unquestionably, the case; I don't see how such an indifference to life, when honour calls you to risk it, can consist with passing it, at any season, immorally and dissolutely.

Here is a gallant officer who will rather be killed than quit his post—than be wanting in the defence of his country! Is not this a fine resolution in one who, by his excesses, makes himself every day less able to serve his country; or who sets an example, which, if followed, would do his country as much mischief as it could have to fear from its most determined enemy?

The inconsiderate and thoughtless may laugh at vice—may give soft terms to very bad actions, or speak of them, as if they were rather matter of jest than abhorrence: but whoever will reflect whence all the misery of mankind arises—what the source is of all the evils we lament; he cannot but own, that if any thing ought to make us serious—if we ought to detest any thing, it should be *that*, from which such terrible effects are derived.

For the very same reason that we prefer health to sickness—ease to pain, we must prefer virtue to vice. Moral evil seems to me to have a necessary connexion with natural. According to my notion of things, there is no crime but what creates pain, or has a tendency to create it to others or ourselves: every criminal is such, by doing something that is directly, or in its consequences, hurtful to himself, or to a fellow creature.

Is not here a foundation of religion that no objections can affect? Deprive us of it, you deprive us of the only effectual restraint from those practices, which are most detrimental to the world—you deprive us of virtue, and thereby of all the true happiness we have here to expect.

To charge religion with the mischief occasioned by mistakes about it, I think full as impertinent, as to decry reason for the wrong use that has been made of it; or government, for the bad administration of *every kind of it, in every part of the world.* What shall prove to the advantage of mankind, will, *in all cases,* depend upon themselves; that which is, confessedly, most for it, in every instance you can think of, you see, occasionally, abused; and by that abuse becoming as hurtful, as it would, otherwise, have been beneficial. Controversy I hate; and to read books of it as ill suits my leisure as my inclination: yet I do not profess a religion, the grounds of which I have never considered. And upon the very same grounds that I am convinced of the truth of religion in general, I am so of the truth of christianity. The good of the world is greatly promoted by it. If we would take christianity for our guide throughout, we could not have a better—we could not have a surer to all the happiness of which our present state admits. Its simplicity may have been disguised—its intention perverted—its doctrines misrepresented, and conclusions drawn, suiting rather the interest or ambition of the expositor, than the directions of the text; but when I resort to the rule itself;—when I find it asserting, that the whole of my duty is to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself—to live always mindful by whom I am sent into, and preserved in, the world, and always disposed to do in it the utmost good in my power; I can no more doubt, whether this is the voice of my Creator, than I can doubt, whether it must be his will, that, when he has made me a reasonable creature, I should act like one. But I will drop a topic, on which I am sure your father must have sufficiently enlarged: I can only speak to it more generally: *difficulties* and *objections* I must leave him to obviate: yet thus much confidently affirming, that if you won't adopt an irreligious scheme, till you find one clear of them, you will continue as good a christian, as it has been our joint care to make you. I pray God you may do so. He that would corrupt your principles, is the enemy you have most to fear; an enemy who means you worse, than any you will draw your sword against.

When you are told, that the soldier's religion is his honour, observe the practice of them from whom you hear it; you'll soon then have proof enough, they mean little more by honour, than what is requisite to keep or advance their commissions—that they are still in their own opinion men of nice honour, though abandoned to the grossest sensuality and excess—though chargeable with acts of the foulest perfidy and injustice—that the honour by which they govern themselves differs as widely from what is truly such, as humour from reason. True honour is to virtue what good breeding is to good nature, the polishing, the refinement of it. And the more you think of christianity, the more firmly you will be persuaded, that in its precepts *the strictest rules of honour* are contained. By these I, certainly, would have you always guided, and, on that very account, have reminded you of the religion, which not only shows you them, but proposes the reward likeliest to attach you to them. I have done. Take care of yourself. You won't fly danger, don't court it. If the one would bring your courage into question, the other will your sense. The rash is as ill qualified for command, as the coward. May every blessing attend you! And to secure your happiness, live always attentive to your duty; reverence and obey Him to whom you owe your being, and from whom must come whatever good you can hope for in it. Adieu. I can't say it would sufficiently comfort me for your loss, that you died with honour; but it would infinitely less afflict me to hear of you among the dead, than among the profligate.

What has been the issue of instructions like these from both parents? *Scipio*, for so we will call the worthy man, from the time he received his commission, has alike distinguished himself by his courage and conduct. The greatest dangers have not terrified, the worst examples have not corrupted him. He has approved himself disdaining by cowardice to keep *life*, and abhorring to shorten *it* by excess: the bravery with which he has hazarded *it*, is equalled by the prudence with which he passes *it*.

§ 113. *On the Employment of Time.*

ESSAY THE SECOND.

Among the *Indians* there is an excellent set of men, called *Gymnosophists:* these I greatly admire, not as skilled in propagating the vine——in the arts of grafting or agriculture. They apply not themselves to till the ground——to search after gold——to break the horse——to tame the bull——to shear or feed sheep or goats. What is it then that engages them? one thing preferable to all these. Wisdom is the pursuit as well of the old men, the teachers, as of the young, their disciples. Nor is there any thing among them that I so much praise, as their aversion to sloth and idleness.

When the tables are spread, before the meat is set on them, all the youth, assembling to their meal, are asked by their masters——In what useful task they have been employed from sun-rising to that time.—One represents himself as having been chosen an arbitrator, and succeeded by his prudent management in composing a difference——in making them friends who were at variance. A second had been paying obedience to his parents' commands. A third had made some discovery by his own application, or learned something by another's instruction. The rest give an account of themselves in the same way.

He who has done nothing to deserve a dinner, is turned out of doors without one.

Dipping into *Apuleius* for my afternoon's amusement, the foregoing passage was the last I read, before I fell into a slumber, which exhibited to me a vast concourse of the fashionable people at the court-end of the town, under the examination of a Gymnosophist, how they had passed their morning. He began with the men.

Many of them acknowledged, that the morning, properly speaking, was near gone, before their eyes were opened.

Many of them had only risen to dress—to visit—to amuse themselves at the drawing-room or coffee-house.

Some had by riding or walking been consulting that health at the beginning of the day, which the close of it would wholly pass in impairing.

Some from the time they had got on their own clothes, had been engaged in seeing others put on theirs ——in attending levees——in endeavouring to procure, by their importunity, what they had disqualified themselves for by their idleness.

Some had been early out of their beds, but it was because they could not, from their ill-luck the preceding evening, rest in them; and when risen, as they had no spirits, they could not reconcile themselves to any sort of application.

Some had not had it in their power to do what was of much consequence; in the former part of the morning, they wanted to speak with their tradesmen; and in the latter, they could not be denied to their friends.

Others, truly, had been reading, but reading what could make them neither wiser nor better, what was not worth their remembering, or what they should wish to forget.

It grieved me to hear so many of eminent rank, both in the sea and land service, giving an account of themselves that levelled them with the meanest under their command.

Several appeared with an air expressing the fullest confidence that what they had to say for themselves would be to the philosopher's entire satisfaction. They had been employed as Virtuosi should be——had been exercising their skill in the liberal arts, and encouraging the artists. Medals, pictures, statues had undergone their examination, and been their purchase. They had been inquiring what the literati of *France*, *Germany*, *Italy*, had of late published; and they had bought what suited their respective tastes.

When it appeared, that the completing a *Roman* series had been their concern, who had never read over, in their own language, a *Latin* historian——that they who grudged no expense for originals, knew them only by hearsay from their worst copies——that the very persons who had paid so much for the labour of *Rysbrack*, upon Sir *Andrew's judgment*, would, if they had followed their *own*, have paid the same sum for that of *Bird's*——That the book-buyers had not laid out their money on what they ever proposed to read, but on what they had heard commended, and what they wanted to fit a shelf, and fill a library that only served them for a breakfast-room; this class of men the Sage pronounced the idlest of all idle people, and doubly blameable, as wasting alike their time and their fortune.

The follies of one sex had so tired the philosopher, that he would suffer no account to be given him of those of the other. It was easy for him to guess how the females must have been employed, where such were the examples in those they were to *honour and obey*.

For a short space there was a general silence. The Gymnosophist at length expressed himself to this effect: You have been represented to me as a people who would use your own reason——who would think for yourselves——who would freely inquire, form your opinions on evidence, and adopt no man's sentiments merely because they were his. A character, to which, for aught I can find, you are as ill entitled as, perhaps, most nations in the universe. The freedom with which great names are opposed, and received opinions questioned by *some* among you, is, probably, no other than what is used by *some* of every country in which liberal inquiries are pursued. The difference is, *you* safely publish your sentiments on every subject; to *them* it would be penal to avow any notions that agree not with those of their superiors. But when you thus pass your days, as if you thought not at all, have you any pretence to freedom of thought? can they be said to love truth, who shun consideration? when it seems your study to be useless, to be of no service to others or yourself——when you treat your time as a burthen, to be eased of which is your whole concern——when that situation, those circumstances of life are accounted the happiest, which most tempt you to be idle and insignificant; human nature is as much dishonoured by you, as it is by any of those people, whose savageness or superstition you have in the greatest contempt.

Let me not be told, how well you approve your reason by your arguments or your sentiments. The proper use of reason, is to act reasonably. When you so grossly fail in this, all the just apprehensions you may entertain, all the right things you may say, only prove with what abilities you are formed, and with what guilt you misapply them.

The Sage here raising his arm with his voice, I concluded it adviseable not to stand quite so near him. In attempting to remove, I awoke, and hastened to commit to writing a dream that had so much truth in it, and therefore expressed how seasonable it will be to consider to what use of our time we are directed.

First, By our present state and condition;

Secondly, By the relation we bear to each other;

Thirdly, By that in which we stand towards the Deity.

If we are raised above the brutes——if we are undeniably of a more excellent kind, we must be made for a different purpose; we cannot have the faculties they want, but in order to a life different from theirs; and when our life is not such——when it is but a round of eating, drinking, and sleeping, as theirs is——when, by our idleness and inattention, we are almost on a level with them, both as to all sense of duty, and all useful knowledge that we possess, our time must have been grievously misemployed; there is no surer token of its having been so, than that we have done so little to advance ourselves above the herd, when our Creator had vouchsafed us so far superior a capacity.

The creatures below us are wholly intent on the pleasures of sense, because they are capable of no other: but as man is capable of much higher and nobler, he must have this privilege, that his pursuits may be accordingly——that his better nature should be better employed.

Were we born only to satisfy the appetites we have in common with the brute kind, we should, like it, have no higher principle to direct us——to furnish us with other delights. All the distinction between us that this principle *can* make, was, undoubtedly, intended by our Creator to *be* made; and the less any appears, our abuse of this principle, and consequently our opposition to our Maker's will, is the more notorious and blameable.

It may seem then plain, that there are advantages to be pursued, and a certain degree of excellence to be attained by us, according to the powers that we have, and the creatures below us want. How industrious we should be to improve each opportunity for this, we may learn by attending, in the next place, to our *uncertain*, and, at all events, *short* continuance on earth.

We are fully apprised, that by the pains of a few hours or days, no progress can be made in any thing, that has the slightest pretence to commendation. Those accomplishments, that are confined to our fingers' ends, what months, what years of application do they cost us! and, alas! what trifles are the most admired of them, in comparison of a great number of others for which we are qualified; and which, as they are so infinitely preferable to these, ought to be so much the more earnestly sought! when, therefore, the whole term allowed for gaining and using them, is thus precarious and short, we can have but a very small portion of it to dispose of as we please——to pass entirely as mere fancy or humour suggests. If much is to be done in a very short time, the good husbandry of it must be consulted: and there is no one, who considers what we, universally, may effect—in how many particulars we may be of service to ourselves——how much depends upon our endeavours——how necessary they are for our attaining what should be most valued by us, what is of greatest consequence to us; there is, I say, no one, who considers these things, but must admit, that we have much to do, and therefore, that the scanty term we have for it ought to be carefully managed—can only by a prudent management suffice for the despatch of such a task.

And our opportunities, for making attainments thus desirable, should be so much the more diligently watched and readily embraced, as they meet with many unavoidable interruptions even in our short life.

How great a part of our time is *necessarily* lost to us—is consumed by, that shorter death, our sleep! we are really better economists than ordinary in this instance, if only a third part of our life thus passes: and on the rest of it what a large demand is made by our meals——by our justifiable recreations——by the forms and civilities, to which a proper correspondence with our fellow-creatures obliges us? add to these necessary deductions, the many casual ones with which we all, unavoidably, meet, and it will soon appear, what an exceeding small part of our short continuance on earth, we have to bestow on such purposes of living, as alone can be of credit to us.

We are further to reflect, that in the small part of our life, in which we can be employed like reasonable creatures, opportunities, for doing what may be of greatest moment, do not always serve us: and with some of them, if lost we never again meet.

We depend very much on things without us, and over which we have no sort of command. There may be an extraordinary advantage derived to us from them; but, if the first offer of this be neglected, we may never have a second.

Nor is it only the dependence we have on things without us, that requires us so carefully to watch our opportunities; we have a still more awakening call, if possible, to this from within ourselves——from the restraints to which the exercise of our powers is subjected. We cannot use these when and as we please——we cannot choose the time of life wherein to avail ourselves of our natural endowments, and to reap all the advantage designed us in them.

When we are in our youth, our bodies easily receive whatever mien or motion can recommend us: where is the sound so difficult, which our tongue cannot be then taught to express? to what speed may our feet then be brought, and our hands to what dexterity? but if we are advanced to manhood before the forming us in any of these ways is attempted, all endeavour after it will then either be quite fruitless, or, probably, less successful than it would have been in our earlier years; and whatever its success be, a much greater might have formerly been obtained with half the pains.

The very same is it with our understanding, with our will and our passions. There is a certain season when our minds may be enlarged——when a vast stock of useful truths may be acquired——when our passions will readily submit to the government of reason—when right principles may be so fixed in us, as to influence every important action of our future lives: but the season for this extends neither to the whole, nor to any considerable length of our continuance upon earth; it is limited to a few years of our term; and, if throughout these we neglect it, error or ignorance are, according to the ordinary course of things, entailed upon us. Our will becomes our law——our lusts gain a strength that we afterwards vainly oppose——wrong inclinations become so confirmed in us, that they defeat all our endeavours to correct them.

II. Let me proceed to consider what directions are furnished us for the employment of our time, by the relation we bear to each other.

Society is manifestly upheld by a circulation of kindness: we are all of us, in some way or other, wanting assistance, and, in like manner, qualified to give it. None are in a state of independency on their fellow-creatures. The most slenderly endowed are not a mere burthen on their kind; even they can contribute their share to the common good, and may be to the political body, what those parts of us, in which we least pride ourselves, are to the natural, not greatly indeed its ornaments, but much for its real use.

We learn what are justly our natural claims, from this mutual dependency: that on its account, as well as for other reasons, our life is not to pass in a round of pleasure or idleness, or according to the suggestions of mere humour and fancy, or in sordid or selfish pursuits.

There can be nothing more evidently my duty than that I should return the kindness I receive—than that, if many are employed in promoting my interest, I should be as intent on furthering theirs.

All men are by nature equal. Their common passions and affections, their common infirmities, their common wants give such constant remembrances of this equality, even to them who are most disposed to forget it, that they cannot, with all their endeavours, render themselves wholly unmindful thereof——they cannot become *insensible*, how unwilling soever they may be to *consider*, that their debt is as large as their demands——that they owe to others, as much as they can reasonably expect from them.

But are all then upon a level—must those distinctions be thrown down, which, being the chief support of the order and peace of society, are such of its happiness; and which nature herself may be judged to appoint, by the very dispositions and abilities with which she forms us; qualifying some for rule, and fitting some for subjection?

That, in many instances, we are all upon a level, none can deny, who regard the materials of our bodies—the diseases and pain to which we are subject—our entrance into the world, the means of preserving us in it—the length of our continuance therein—our passage out of it. But then as it will not follow, that, because we are made of the same materials—are liable to the same accidents and end, we, therefore, are the same throughout; neither is it a just conclusion, that, because we are levelled in our dependence, we should be so in our employments.

Superiority will remain——distinctions will be preserved, though all of us must serve each other, while that service is differently performed.

Superiority has no sort of connexion with idleness and uselessness: it may exempt us from the bodily fatigue of our inferiors, from their confinement and hardships—it may entitle some to the deference and submission of those about them; but it by no means exempts any of us from all attention to the common good, from all endeavours to promote it—by no means does it entitle any of us to live, like so many drones, on the industry of others, to reap all the benefit we can from them, and be of none to them.

The distinctions of prince and subject—noble and vulgar—rich and poor, consist not in this, that the one has a great deal to do, and the other nothing—that the one must be always busied, and the other may be always taking his pleasure, or enjoying his ease. No, in this they consist, that these several persons are differently *busied*—assist each other in different ways.

The sovereign acquaints himself with the true state of his kingdom—directs the execution of its laws—provides for the exact administration of justice—secures the properties of his people—preserves their peace. These are his cares; and that they may be the more assured of success, and have their weight more easily supported, his commands find the readiest obedience—a large revenue is assigned him—the highest honours are paid him. It is not, in any of these instances, the man who is regarded, but the head of the community; and that for the benefit of the community—for the security of its quiet, and the furtherance of its prosperity.

The nobility have in their task, to qualify themselves for executing the more honourable and important offices of the commonwealth, and to execute these offices with diligence and fidelity. The very station, to which they are advanced, is supposed either the recompense of great service done the public, or of the merit of an uncommon capacity to serve it.

The richer members of the state, as they have all the helps that education can give them—as in their riper age they have all the opportunity they can wish for to improve upon these helps—as their circumstances exempt them from the temptations, to which poverty is exposed; to them is committed the discharge of those offices in the commonwealth, which are next to the highest, and sometimes even of these—they either concur in making laws for the society, or are chiefly concerned in executing them—commerce, arts, science, liberty, virtue, whatever can be for the credit and peace—for the ease and prosperity of a nation, depends on the part they act——on their conduct.

Let them be a supine, indolent race, averse to rational inquiries—to all serious application—let it be their business to divert themselves, to give a loose to fancy and appetite—let all their schemes be those of self-indulgence, and their life a round of vanity and sensuality; sad must be the condition of the nation to which they belong! throughout it must be disorder and confusion—it must have the worst to fear from its more powerful neighbours.

And as, in all countries, *they* who are distinguished by *their* rank or fortune, have *their* post, *their* duty, *their* task for the common good—as to discharge this requires many accomplishments, the attainment of which, is matter of much attention and pains, requires an improved understanding, command of passions, an integrity and resolution, which only can be preserved by an habitual seriousness and reflection—as *they* cannot fail in *their* parts, cannot misemploy *their* leisure, and unfit themselves for, or be negligent in the service appointed *them*, but *their* country must suffer grievously in its most valuable interests; the diligence *they* should use, the little time *they* have to trifle away is evident: it is most evident under what obligations *they* are, not to abandon themselves to merely animal gratifications, and the pleasures of sense—to sloth and inactivity.

Nor is it only from the omission of what *they* ought to perform, that the public will in this case suffer, but from the example *they* set. An insensibility that they are to live to any useful purposes—a thoughtlessness of their having any thing to mind but their humour and liking—a gross carelessness how their days pass, cannot appear amongst those of higher rank, but the infection will spread itself among those of a lower; these will desire to be as lazy and worthless as their superiors—to have the same share of mirth and jollity—to be of as little consequence to the public.

That this will be the case, is as certain, as experience can make any thing. It has been, and is, every where, found, that where they, who have the wealth, and are therefore supposed, though very unreasonably, to have the sense of a nation, treat their time as of no account, only think of making it subservient to their excesses, their vanity, or their sports; the same wrong notions soon spread among their inferiors.

The populace, indeed, cannot be quite so dissolute—they cannot be so immersed in sloth and sensuality, as the richer part of a nation, because their circumstances permit it not: their maintenance must cost them some care and pains, but they will take as little as they can—they will, as far as is in their power, have their fill of what their betters teach them to be the comforts of life, the enjoyments proper for reasonable creatures—they cannot debauch themselves in the more elegant and expensive ways, but they will in those which suit their education and condition——they cannot be wholly useless, but if they make themselves of any service, it shall only be, because they are paid for it, because they cannot be supported without it.

And how can we expect that things should be otherwise? It is not, upon the lowest computation, one in a hundred who forms his manners upon the principles of reason. Example, customary practice govern us. And, as they, who are more especially dependent upon others, have it taught them, from their very infancy, to respect those on whom they depend—to observe them—to be directed by them; no wonder that they should be fond of imitating them as far as their situation admits; no wonder that they should copy their follies, since *that* they can do most easily, and *that* most suits their natural depravity.

But to him, whose industry is his support, I would observe; he should not think, that, if they, who enjoy the plenty he wants, are prodigal of their time—misemploy it—waste it; *their* abuse of it will at all excuse *his*. He cannot possibly be ignorant how unfitting such a waste of time is—how much good it hinders—how much evil it occasions—and how much a greater sufferer he will be from it, than those who are in more plentiful circumstances.

And let it be considered, by both high and low, rich and poor, that there can be nothing so becoming them, there can be nothing that will give them so solid, so lasting a satisfaction, as to be employed in serving mankind—in furthering their happiness. What thought can we entertain more honourable with respect to God himself, than that "his mercy is over all his works"—that his goodness is continually displaying itself through the whole extent of being—that the unthankful and the evil he not only forbears, but still seeks to awaken to a due acknowledgment of him—to a just sense of their true interest, by persevering in his kindness towards them, by continuing to them the blessings they so ill deserve?

And if the consideration of the universal Creator as thus acting be really that which makes him appear most amiable to us—which affects us with the most profound veneration of him, and chiefly renders it pleasing to us to contemplate his other perfections; what worth do we evidence, how highly do we recommend ourselves, when employed either in qualifying ourselves for doing good, or in doing it,——when we have the common advantage our constant pursuit—when we seek for pleasure in making ourselves of use, and feel happiness in the degree in which we communicate it?

III. What employment of our time the relation in which we stand to God suggests to us, I am next to show.

Every one who reads this, I may justly suppose sensible that there is a nature superior to his own, and even possessed of the highest excellencies—that to it we owe our existence, owe the endowments which place us at the head of all the creatures upon earth, owe whatever can make us desire to have our existence continued to us—that by this superior nature *alone*, many of our wants can be supplied—that on it we entirely depend—that from its favour the whole of our increasing happiness can be expected.

From what we thus know of God and ourselves, there must arise certain duties towards him, the performance of which will have its demand on our time. His perfections require our highest veneration; this cannot be exercised or preserved without our serious attention to and recollection of them. His mercies demand our most humble and grateful acknowledgments; proper acts of thanksgiving are therefore what we should be blameable to omit; they daily become us, and should be made with all the solemnity and fervour, that suit the kindness vouchsafed us, and the majesty of him to whom we address ourselves.[*] A due sense of our weakness and wants is a constant admonition to us to look up to that Being whose power and goodness are infinite, and to cherish such dispositions as are most likely to recommend us to him: hence it is evident what stress we should lay upon those awful invocations of the divine interposition in our favour, and upon that devout confession of our unworthiness of it, which have a natural tendency to keep the Deity present to our remembrance, and to purify our hearts.

Public acknowledgments of the goodness of God, and application for his blessings, contribute to give a whole community suitable apprehensions of him; and these, if it be my duty to entertain, it is equally my duty to propagate; both as the regard I pay the divine excellencies is hereby fitly expressed, and as the same advantage, that I receive from such apprehensions, will be received by all whom they affect in the same manner with me. Hence it is clearly our duty to join in the public worship—to promote by our regular attendance upon it, a like regularity in others.

These observations will, I hope, be thought sufficient proofs, that, from the relation we bear to God, a certain portion of our time is his claim—ought to be set apart for meditation upon him, for prayer to him, and for such other exercise of our reason as more immediately respects him, and suits our obligations towards him.

Dean Bolton.

§ 114. *On the Employment of Time.*

ESSAY THE THIRD.

"Since all things are uncertain, favour yourself." Where have I met with it? Whose soever the advice is, it proceeds upon a supposition absolutely false, that there is an uncertainty in all things: and were the supposition true, the inference would be wrong; did we allow, that there was such an uncertainty in all things, it would be wrongly concluded from thence, that we should favour ourselves.

First, there is not the uncertainty here supposed. With regard to those things which call us to thoughts very different from that of *favouring* ourselves—which should withdraw our attention from our own will, our own liking—which suggest to us quite other considerations than of taking our ease, and indulging our appetites—which should make the animal life the least of our concern—which should render us only solicitous to purify ourselves, and be usefsul to our fellow creatures; with regard to these things, I say, we have either absolute certainty, or the highest degree of probability.

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[*] Never to acknowledge the enjoyments and privileges we have received, and hold, of God, is in effect to *deny* that we received them from him: not to apply to him for a supply of our wants, is to *deny*, either our wants, or his power of helping us. *Religion of Nature delineated*, p. 121.

If I should never pray to God, or worship him at all, such a total omission would be equivalent to this assertion, there is no God, who governs the world, to be adored; which, if there is such a Being, must be contrary to truth. Also *generally* and *notoriously* to neglect this duty, though not always, will favour, if not directly proclaim, the same untruth. For certainly to worship God after this manner, is only to worship him accidentally, which is to declare it a great accident that he is worshipped at all, and this approaches as near as possible to a *total* neglect. Besides, such a sparing and unfrequent worshipper of the Deity, betrays such an habitual disregard of him, as will render every religious act insignificant and null. *Ib.* p. 18.

To have produced so much beauty and order, as every where discover themselves, intelligence was not only *requisite*, but great wisdom and power. The beneficial effects naturally resulting from the things thus beautifully formed and orderly disposed, *demonstrate* the goodness, as well as the wisdom and power of their author.

That the benefits he designed, should constantly take place, *must*, as he is a good being, *be agreeable to his will;* and whatever hinders their taking effect, *must be disagreeable to it.*

We *cannot have a surer mark* of what pleases him, than its being productive of happiness; and whatever has misery accompanying it, *carries with it the clearest proof* of its displeasing him.

A virtuous practice greatly furthering the happiness of mankind, *must be pleasing to their Maker ;* a vicious one *must displease him*, as it necessarily obstructs their happiness.

If from any accidental indisposition of things, as from the number of the criminal, virtue should *here* miss its reward, there is *great likelihood* that it will *elsewhere* receive it; and, if vice, by a like accident, should, in particular instances, not carry with it those marks of its offending the Governor of the world, which it in most cases bears, there is the *highest probability* that it will have its punishment in some future state. There is that probability in favour of *virtue*, not only from what our reasonings on the justice and goodness of God induce us to think *it* has to expect from him, but also from the visible manner in which he signifies his approbation of *it*. He has impressed a sense of *its* worth on the minds of all mankind—he has made satisfaction inseparable from a conformity to *it*—he has appointed many advantages, in the ordinary course of things, *its* attendants: which seem concurring *assurances*, that to whatsoever disadvantages *it* may now occasionally expose us, they will be at length fully recompensed. And there is the *probability* I have mentioned, that the guilty will not be always without a punishment adequate to their crimes, not only from the apprehensions we may fitly entertain of a just Governor of the universe; but, also, from the manner in which he, to the notice of all men, expresses his abhorrence of vice: annexing to *many* crimes immediate inconveniences—giving *others* a very short respite from the severest distress, the painfulest diseases—allowing *none* to have our reason and conscience on their side, to be approved by us in our hours of seriousness and calm reflection.

Virtue is, *evidently*, preserved and promoted by frequent consideration—by diligence and application—by the denial of our appetites—by the restraint of our inclinations—by a constant watchfulness over our passions—by cherishing in ourselves sentiments of humanity and benevolence. Vice is, as *manifestly*, produced, and confirmed by inattention—by supineness and carelessness—by favouring our appetites—by consulting rather what we are disposed to, than what is best for us, rather what inclination, than what reason suggests—by an attachment to the satisfaction of the present moment, to our immediate profit or convenience—by adopting narrow, selfish principles.

Thus it will appear, that there is by no means an uncertainty in all things. Most certain it is from whence virtue has its security and improvement. Equally certain is it how we become bad, and how we are made worse. Virtue has, in the nature of things, a reward of which it cannot be deprived, and vice as sure a punishment. All those accidents which obstruct either the advantages suiting a virtuous practice, or the sufferings that a vicious one ought to feel, may *fitly* carry our thoughts to some future state, when each will have its full desert from that Being, who has so clearly expressed as well his approbation of virtue, as his abhorrence of vice; and whose goodness, wisdom, and power, as they admit of *demonstration*, so *they cannot but be believed* to concur in bestowing those rewards and punishments, which will be most for the welfare of the noblest part of the creation, the intelligent part of it.

But if there were the uncertainty that is not; the right consequence would not be, favour yourself: it would be secure yourself: provide against the worst. Let your present enjoyments be directed by the influence they may have on your future happiness: consider the whole possible extent of your existence, and forego the satisfaction of a few moments, rather than hazard the loss of a good that may continue for endless ages.

Such seem the proper inferences in this case; and the security of ourselves is very unlikely to be effected by favouring ourselves: the result of this, in a remoter period, may, with the highest degree of probability, be conjectured from what is, every day, experienced.

Bear and forbear, is the lesson for him who merely seeks to give his present life all the comfort in his power. Great inconveniences we cannot even here avoid, but by submitting to lesser.

Freedom from pain is the price of the enjoyments we deny ourselves; and strength of body purchased by the exercise that so severely fatigues it.

To what sleepless nights would he be condemned, whose ease throughout the day was to have no interruption? How little relish should we have of our food, were we to know nothing of the disquiet of hunger? The man who would most taste the gratifications of sense, must be the most sparing in his application to them; *thence it is* they not only are heightened, but continued to us. It seems the condition of our being, that we should have no pleasure *gratis*—that we should pay for each, before or after its enjoyment. To decline whatever we could be less pleased with, is the surest way to increase both the number of our sufferings, and their weight.

What can be more precarious than the continuance of human life? Who in his twentieth year acknowledges not how uncertain it is whether he shall see his fortieth? Yet no one of common prudence seeks barely to crowd as much satisfaction into his life, as can consist with his reaching that period: there is no prudent man but denies himself many things, in hopes of attaining a much longer term.

We must unusually fail in the love of our children, if we would not pursue their welfare, in the same way by which we judge our own best consulted. But where is the advocate for "favour yourself, since all things are uncertain," who, if discretion makes any part of his character, governs himself by that principle in their education—who does not restrain them in a thousand instances? while yet the uneasiness it gives, and the tears it costs them, may probably never find that very small recompense, which must be the utmost he can propose from it. I say, this recompense may, *probably*, never be found; a late eminent mathematician having, upon an exact calculation, observed, that one half of those that are born, are dead in seventeen years time.

Some claim to a public spirit, to a love of their country, we find made by the generality of us, even in this very profligate age. But from him, whose rule it is to favour himself, the public can have nothing to expect. Were this the prevailing principle among us, it is obvious how little regard would be shown to the common welfare.

All of the learned professions would regulate their application, by its subserviency to their maintenance, and think they had nothing so much to study, as how to make their fortune.

Soldier and sailor would have no notion of any honour distinct from their advantage—of any obligation they could be under, when their pay might be safe, to endanger their persons.

The people would judge none so fit to represent them, as they who had been at the greatest expense in corrupting them: and the representatives of the people would see no reason why the whole of what was to be gained should go to their constituents.

In short, nothing but supineness and sloth—an attachment to their ease, and the gratification of their senses—low, unmanly views—pursuits throughout the most selfish and sordid could prevail, among all orders and degrees of men, in any country, where the received doctrine was, *favour yourself*.

Hence certainly is it, that not only the better constituted governments, but even the nations of a less refined policy, have encouraged so much an indifference to the scanty portion of life here allotted us—to the continuance, the ease, the conveniences of it; exciting, by various methods, each member of the community, to have chiefly at heart the public interest—to be ever diligent and active in promoting it—to submit to any difficulties for the service of his country, and to despise death in its defence.

Nor do we, universally, esteem any characters more, than those of the persons who have distinguished themselves by their disinterestedness—by their zeal for the common good—by their slighting all private advantages that came in competition with it.

What has been the language of the more generous Heathen, but the very reverse of favour thyself? *Plato* advises his friend *Archytas* to consider "that we are not born for ourselves alone—that our country, our parents, our friends have their respective claims upon us." *Epist.* ix. p. 358. vol. 3.

Aristotle, in settling the true difference between the lawful and culpable love of ourselves, observes, that such love of ourselves is, undoubtedly, blameable, as induces us to seek as large a share as may be, of wealth, honour, and sensual pleasure. He, afterwards, considers a life of reason and virtue, as the proper life of a man, and pronounces him the true lover of himself, who makes such a life his care.

He goes on, "when all are intent on the practice of what is right, and each lays himself out on the worthiest actions, the public welfare will, thereby, be effectually provided for, and every private person consult his own greatest happiness. It is most truly said, of the good man, that he will serve his friends and his country—will do it, even at the expense of his own life. For, as to wealth, honour, and all those other goods about which there is so much stir in the world, he will have *no* regard to them, when they come into competition with the discharge of his duty.

He will rather choose to live one year well, than many at random. He is justly thought the good man, who has nothing so much at heart, as how to act rightly."

To mention another *Greek* writer;

We are born, says the excellent emperor *Antoninus*, to assist each other, l. 2. § 1. His counsel is, "whatsoever you do, do it with a view to your being a good man;

good, not in the ordinary, but in the strict and proper sense of the word." l. iv. § 10. "In this delight, in this repose yourself, in passing from one useful action to another; still mindful of the Deity." l. vi. § 7.

"Whatsoever I do," says he, "by myself, or the assistance of others, ought wholly to be directed by what the common advantage requires." l. vii. § 5.

He, elsewhere, censures every action of ours, that has no reference either immediately, or more remotely, to the duties of social life, l. ix. § 23. To despise, says *Tully*, and make no account of pleasure, life, wealth, in comparison of the public welfare, is the part of a great and generous mind.—A life of toil and trouble in order to promote, if possible, the good of all mankind, would be much more agreeable to nature, than to pass one's days in solitude, not only without any care, but enjoying the greatest pleasures, and having every thing that could be wanted at command. *De Off.* l. iii. 283, 284.

We are all, according to *Seneca*, members of one great body, Ep. 95. We must consult the happiness of others, if we would our own. In his treatise *of a Happy Life*, mentioning what the man must be, who may hope to pass hence to the abodes of the celestial beings; part of his description of him is, "that he lives as if he knew himself born for others—consults in all he does the approbation of his conscience—regulates his every action by considering it as well known to the public, as it is to himself—treats the whole world as his country—regards the gods as present wherever he is, and as remarking whatever he acts and speaks."

True happiness is, throughout this author's works, considered as derived from virtue—from the steady pursuit of what is right and our duty.

These reflections will, I hope, appear not improperly introducing the consideration of the part we have to act as expectants of happiness in a future state,—the subject of the following essay.

This expectation does not indeed furnish any employment of our time that would not be comprehended under the heads on which I have already enlarged; but it is the strongest possible enforcement of what they teach us.

Can I suppose that beyond the grave there is any happiness prepared for me, if I live unmindful of the privileges here vouchsafed me—if, when I am placed above the beasts, I will put myself upon a level with them—if that spiritual part of me, which makes me a fit subject for this happiness, be neglected, and all my care and pains laid out on my body, on what was earth so lately, and must so speedily be earth again?

Are there certain dispositions which prepare us for, and which, by being perfected, probably constitute the happiness of another life; and may we hope to obtain it, when our pursuits contributed to suppress these dispositions, or when we are wholly regardless of cultivating them?

Whatever I hope for in a future abode, I ought to think the reward of something here done by me; and when the time for action here is so short, even in its longest continuance—when likewise our opportunities are so few, and so irrecoverably lost, we must conclude it most fitting, in order to the success of our hopes, to embrace the opportunity before us; not to neglect it from a presumption of finding others which perhaps may never come, or, if they do come, may be less favourable to us than the present; but to derive from this every advantage it is capable of yielding us.

Further, if according to the greater or less use of which we make ourselves to our fellow-creatures, we more or less answer the end of our creation, we must conceive this to be a point, our special regard to which will be the necessary consequence of the views we have beyond the grave. The bliss we then promise ourselves cannot be thought a likelier reward of any practice, than of that which aims at the most extensive good; nor can one of common sense think such happiness likely to be our portion, after a life spent as unprofitably, as that of those creatures, the whole of whose satisfactions we all confine to those they at present enjoy—to their present existence. Hence our hopes after death will be perpetually urging us to what we can do most for the good of mankind, and must be a motive to it of the greatest weight.

Thus, likewise, when I contemplate a more desirable state of being, than what I am now granted, awaiting me at my departure hence; as it is impossible that I should not at the same time take into my consideration, to whom I must owe this blessing, from whom it can be received; I must hereby be necessarily led to a great desire of pleasing him from whom it is to come, and therefore to all such application to him, and acknowledgment of his excellences, as can be supposed due from and required of me.

To all the several tasks I have mentioned, we are thus particularly directed by attending to the happiness reserved for us; the consideration of it thus strongly enforces their performance.

How far it must in general contribute to the best employment of our time, the following observations may, I hope, fully convince us.

If we survey the things, on the value of which we are universally agreed, we shall perceive few, if any, of them obtained or secured without more or less care on our part, and some of them only the recompense of our painfulest endeavour. The long enjoyment of health is in vain expected, if we wholly decline the fatigue of exercise, and the uneasiness of self-denial. The greatest estate must at length be wasted by him, who will be at no trouble in the management of it, who cannot torment his brains with examining accounts, and regulating the various articles of a large expense. Whose power is so established that the preservation of it costs him not much solicitude—many anxious thoughts; and compels him not to mortify himself in numerous instances? This is the case of them whom *we esteem* the most fortunate of their kind. As to the generality, how difficult do they find the acquisition of the meanest of these advantages? what years of diligence does it cost them to raise but a moderate fortune? vast numbers we find struggling throughout their lives for a bare support.

The chief blessings of life—the goods most worthy our pursuit, are not only *for the most part*, but *altogether*, the fruits of long and unwearied endeavours after them. Where is the very useful art that can be learned without a close and tedious application—that we can make any tolerable progress in, before many of our days are passed? how much, and what an attentive experience—what repeated observations, and how exact a reasoning upon them, are necessary to form us to any degree of wisdom?—duly to regulate our passions—to have them under command—rightly directed, and more or less warm proportionably to the influence their object has upon our happiness, will cost us, as every one is sensible, a watchfulness and care of such continuance, as is submitted to by few even of those, who best know how far it would be overpaid by the good it purchases.

If then we pay so dear for every satisfaction we now enjoy—if there be nothing desirable on earth but what has its price of labour set upon it, and what is most desirable comes to us by the most labour; who in his wits can believe that happiness far exceeding the utmost in our present state, will at length be our portion without any solicitude we need be at about it—without any qualifications we have to acquire in order to it—without any pains we are to take after it? Nothing in Paganism or *Mahommedism*, nothing in *Popery* is so absurd as this supposition.

There is an uniformity in all the proceedings of God. As they are all grounded on an unerring wisdom, they must testify their correspondence to *it*, by what they have to *each other:* and so we find they do in all cases wherein we can fathom them. We know not, indeed, *in what way* we are to be made happy in another life; but *with what* our being so is connected—*on what* it must depend, we are sufficiently instructed. The means of making ourselves thus happy, which are put in our power, plainly teach, that by *their* use it must be effected. Lesser goods, derived to us only by our care and industry, demonstrate how we are to secure greater. The chief blessings, that are now within our reach, being never vouchsafed but to our extraordinary efforts—to our most earnest endeavours to gain them, lead us to the fullest conviction, that the same must be the condition of whatever enjoyments we can promise ourselves after our death—that they will only be the reward of the diligence with which they have been sought—of the difficulties their pursuit has occasioned us.

The Atheist himself—he who having no views beyond this world, gives his lusts their full range in it, acts with abundantly more sense and consistency, than he who, full of the hopes of immortality, yet consults his humour or his ease, his pleasure or his profit, regardless of any understanding he has to improve, or any progress in virtue he has to make. Nor is there any thing that so much confirms the irreligious man in his bad principles, as his observing this conduct in them who profess to believe a God and another life. He thinks, and, I must own, but too justly, that it is the same thing not to be influenced by such a belief, and not to have it—that it is even much more reasonable to give up all expectations of future happiness, than to expect it, and yet do nothing in order to it—do nothing that can appear at all qualifying us for, or entitling us to it: in a word, he rightly thinks that, supposing there be a God of that perfect justice and wisdom which he is represented, he cannot make any difference hereafter between them who have absolutely denied his justice—his wisdom—nay his very being, and them who, with all their acknowledgments of him and his perfections, would yet never sacrifice any of their inclinations to him—would not be at any pains to know his will, or, if they did know it, would only so far obey it, as it was agreeable to their own.

I hardly can quit this subject. So great is the danger—so certain, I may say, is the mischief of persuading ourselves, that an eternal happiness will recompense the little we do to secure it, that I scarcely know when I have said enough to evince what conduct alone it can reward.

As the visible world is the only universal guide to our conjectures on the invisible, and therein, as I have observed, the method of Providence in dispensing its blessing, is manifest to every eye; all those which can most engage our wishes depending wholly on what we do to obtain them: as, likewise, whether we consider the wisdom of God, or his truth, or his justice, they all concur in teaching us this lesson, that an ever-continuing felicity can only be prepared for a distinguished virtue.

As things, I say, are thus, may it not properly be asked, what can it be that so strangely infatuates us—that possesses us with hopes so extravagantly absurd—that makes a pursuit so lazy and remiss, which ought to be so vigorous and uninterrupted? I know not what this possibly can be, but, either the numbers that countenance our practice, or, the reliance we have on the Deity's unbounded goodness.

As to the former, how little stress we should lay on numbers, will be evident from these four considerations.

First, they, who in every age, are most commended for their wisdom and prudence, never take the multitude for their pattern; but, on the other hand, constantly live in a direct opposition to its practices, and dissuade all, to whom they are well-wishers, from them.

Secondly, Those follies and vices, which are the reproach of numbers, are not, therefore, the less mischievous in their consequences. The increasing multitudes of the lewd and drunken do not, in any instance, occasion lewdness and drunkenness to have more favourable circumstances attending them, either with respect to the persons, or the posterity of the guilty: and if God be, in no instance, more favourable to the vicious in this world, because of their numbers; we have hence too sad a proof that they have not the least ground to expect he should be so in the next.

Thirdly, What we call great numbers, are, probably in respect of the whole creation of rational beings, extremely few; perhaps no more than some few grains of sand, in comparison of those amazing heaps that spread the deserts of the earth, and shores of the ocean. Supposing, therefore, all offenders among the human kind, punished by God according to their deserts; that punishment might be making examples of a very small, of the very smallest part of his creatures, for the good of the rest—for preserving innumerable millions—an infinite race in their due obedience.

Fourthly, An established order taking place in all the works of God that we are acquainted with; every thing in the natural world being subjected to certain laws; and in the moral world, good having still a tendency to produce good, nor ever failing to do it, unless from some accidental hindrances; and evil, when things are in their proper course, producing evil: we have very strong reason to believe, that an unchangeable God—he whose wisdom uniformly displays itself—has fixed things thus, that thus they will proceed to all eternity; good following from good, evil from evil; with this difference alone, with respect to us, in another state, that all hindrances of the natural consequences of things will there be removed—nothing will prevent the virtuous man's reaping the fruits of his virtue, nor will any thing hinder the whole of the dismal effects of vice from being felt by them, who have here allowed themselves in it. And, if this be the case, than which nothing is more probable, it is then quite clear, that all the hopes of the guilty from their numbers must be utterly vain—that it would be full as reasonable to think a plague could not be a dangerous distemper, because it is so infectious a one; as to think that we shall be safe amidst our crimes, because of the multitude that share them.

With regard to the goodness of God, how groundless our reliance must be upon it, when we act contrary to the ends for which we were made—when we neglect our opportunities, and abuse our capacities, will, I hope, be sufficiently plain to us, if we attend to the following short remarks.

1. We ascribe goodness to God as a perfection; but nothing can be a

perfection in him, which has, morally speaking, a necessary tendency to make his creatures less perfect—less careful to answer the ends of their creation; and this the divine goodness would certainly do, if it were indeed such as allowed us nothing to fear, though we neglected to use rightly the abilities and opportunities afforded us.

2. As God is the Governor of the world—is acknowledged so by all who own his being; we must, therefore, consider his goodness, as that of a governor, or as consistent with, and agreeable to, a wise government: but can this be said of his goodness, if it exempt from all punishment our wilful and continued disobedience to his laws, and thereby encourage us to disobey them?

3. One attribute or perfection of the Deity cannot clash with another: his goodness, for instance, with his justice: but the punishment of evil is as much a part of justice, as the rewarding of good. To treat evil, as if it were not evil, can neither be agreeable to justice nor truth; and this would be the case—evil would be regarded as if it were not evil, did the goodness of God so favour the wilful offender, that his crimes would never receive their desert.

4. To restrain evil, to obstruct its progress, must be the care of a good Governor, nay, would be the surest proof of his goodness. To punish, therefore, such as act contrary to the law of their nature—contrary to the well-being of society, and therein contrary to their own and the common happiness, is not only a part of justice, but even of goodness itself. We could not consider God as good, had he not properly guarded against his creatures corrupting themselves, and against that corruption extending itself: and what are the discouragements to this, but in the way of punishment—but by the sufferings the guilty have to fear? The more there are who act in defiance of these sufferings, the more necessary it becomes to inflict them; and offenders can have no reason to think that the mercy of God will spare them, when the greatest mercy is shown in obviating the mischief of such examples, by treating them according to what they have deserved.

Let us behold the goodness of God in this light, and this is that in which we ought to see it—this is its true representation; and thus seen, it cannot but convince us how impossible it is that we should have any thing to hope after a life unprofitably, vainly spent—how much such a life has necessarily to fear.

Dean Bolton.

§ 115. *A serious Expostulation with Unbelievers.*

It were to be wished, that the enemies of religion would at least bring themselves to apprehend its nature, before they opposed its authority. Did religion make its boast of beholding God with a clear and perfect view, and of possessing him without covering or veil, the argument would bear some colour, when men should allege, that none of these things about them, do indeed afford this pretended evidence, and this degree of light. But since religion, on the contrary, represents men as in a state of darkness, and of estrangement from God; since it affirms him to have withdrawn himself from their discovery, and to have chosen, in his word, the very style and appellation of *Deus absconditus;* lastly, since it employs itself alike in establishing these two maxims, that God has left, in his church, certain characters of himself, by which they who sincerely seek him, shall not fail of a sensible conviction; and yet that he has, at the same time, so far shaded and obscured these characters, as to render them imperceptible to those who do not seek him with their whole heart, what advantage is it to men, who profess themselves negligent in the search of truth to complain so frequently, that nothing reveals and displays it to them? For this very obscurity, under which they labour, and which they make an exception against the church, does itself evince one of the two grand points which the church maintains (without affecting the other,) and is so far from overthrowing its doctrines, as to lend them a manifest confirmation and support.

If they would give their objections any strength, they ought to urge, that they have applied their utmost endeavour, and have used all means of information, even those which the church recommends, without satisfaction. Did they express themselves thus, they would indeed attack religion in one of its chief pretensions: but I hope to show, in the following papers, that no rational person can speak after this manner; and I dare assert, that none ever did. We know very well, how men under this indifferency of spirit, behave themselves in the case: they suppose themselves to have made the mightiest effort towards the instruction of their minds, when they have spent some hours in reading the scriptures, and have asked some questions of a clergyman concerning the articles of faith. When this is done, they declare to all the world, that they have consulted books and men without success. I shall be excused, if I refrain not from telling such men, that this neglect of theirs is insupportable. It is not a foreign or a petty interest, which is here in debate; we are ourselves the parties, and all our hopes and fortunes are the depending stake.

The immortality of the soul is a thing which so deeply concerns, so infinitely imports us, that we must have utterly lost our feeling, to be altogether cold and remiss in our inquiries about it. And all our actions or designs ought to bend so very different a way, according as we are either encouraged or forbidden to embrace the hope of eternal rewards, that it is impossible for us to proceed with judgment and discretion, otherwise than as we keep this point always in view, which ought to be our ruling object, and final aim.

Thus is it our highest interest, no less than our principal duty, to get light into a subject on which our whole conduct depends. And, therefore, in the number of wavering and unsatisfied men, I make the greatest difference imaginable between those who labour with all their force to obtain instruction, and those who live without giving themselves any trouble, or so much as any thought in this affair.

I cannot but be touched with a hearty compassion for those who sincerely groan under this dissatisfaction; who look upon it as the greatest of misfortunes, and who spare no pains to deliver themselves from it, by making these researches their chief employment, and most serious study. But as for those, who pass their life without reflecting on its issue, and who, for this reason alone, because they find not in themselves a convincing testimony, refuse to seek it elsewhere, and to examine to the bottom, whether the opinion proposed be such as we are wont to entertain by popular simplicity and credulity, or as such, though obscure in itself, yet is built on solid and immoveable foundations, I consider them after quite another manner. The carelessness which they betray in an affair, where their person, their interest, their whole eternity is embarked, rather provokes my resentment than engages my pity. Nay, it strikes me with amazement and astonishment; it is a monster to my apprehension. I speak not this as transported with the pious zeal of a spiritual and rapturous devotion: on the contrary, I affirm, that the love of ourselves, the interest of mankind, and the most simple and artless reason, do naturally inspire us with these sentiments; and that to see thus far, is not to exceed the sphere of unrefined, uneducated men.

It requires no great elevation of soul, to observe, that nothing in this world is productive of true contentment; that our pleasures are vain and fugitive, our troubles innumerable and perpetual: and that, after all, death, which threatens us every moment, must, in the compass of a few years (perhaps of a few days,) put us into the eternal condition of happiness, or misery, or nothing. Between us and these three great periods, or states, no barrier is interposed, but life, the most brittle thing in all nature; and the happiness of heaven being certainly not designed for those who doubt whether they have an immortal part to enjoy it, such persons have nothing left, but the miserable chance of annihilation, or of hell.

There is not any reflection which can have more reality than this, as there is none which has greater terror. Let us set the bravest face on our condition, and play the heroes as artfully as we can; yet see here the issue which attends the goodliest life upon earth.

It is in vain for men to turn aside their thoughts from this eternity which awaits them, as if they were able to destroy it by denying it a place in their imagination: it subsists in spite of them; it advanceth unobserved; and death, which is to draw the curtain from it, will in a short time infallibly reduce them to the dreadful necessity of being for ever nothing, or for ever miserable.

We have here a doubt of the most affrighting consequence, and which, therefore, to entertain, may be well esteemed the most grievous of misfortunes: but, at the same time, it is our indispensable duty not to lie under it, without struggling for deliverance.

He, then, who doubts, and yet seeks not to be resolved, is equally unhappy and unjust: but if withal he appears easy and composed, if he freely declares his indifference, nay, if he takes a vanity in professing it, and seems to make this most deplorable condition the subject of his pleasure and joy, I have not words to fix a name on so extravagant a creature. Where is the very possibility of entering into these thoughts and resolutions? What delight is there in expecting misery without end? What vanity in finding one's self encompassed with impenetrable darkness? Or what consolation in despairing for ever of a comforter?

To sit down with some sort of acquiescence under so fatal an ignorance, is a thing unaccountable beyond all expression; aad they who live with such a disposition, ought to be made sensible of its absurdity and stupidity, by having their inward reflections laid open to them, that they may grow wise by the prospect of their own folly. For behold how men are wont to reason, while they obstinately remain thus ignorant of what they are, and refuse all methods of instruction and illumination.

Who has sent me into the world I know not; what the world is I know not, nor what I am myself. I am under an astonishing and terrifying ignorance of all things. I know not what my body is, what my senses, or my soul; this very part of me which thinks what I speak, which reflects upon every thing else, and even upon itself, yet is as mere a stranger to its own nature, as the dullest thing I carry about me. I behold these frightful spaces of the universe with which I am encompassed, and I find myself chained to one little corner of the vast extent, without understanding why I am placed in this seat, rather than in any other; or why this moment of time given me to live, was assigned rather at such a point, than at any other of the whole eternity which was before me, or of all that which is to come after me. I see nothing but infinities on all sides, which devour and swallow me up like an atom, or like a shadow, which endures but a single instant, and is never to return. The sum of my knowledge is, that I must shortly die: but that which I am most ignorant of is this very death, which I feel unable to decline.

As I know not whence I came, so I know not whither I go; only this I know, that at my departure out of the world, I must either fall for ever into nothing, or into the hands of an incensed God, without being capable of deciding, which of these two conditions shall eternally be my portion. Such is my state full of weakness, obscurity, and wretchedness. And from all this I conclude, that I ought, therefore, to pass all the days of my life, without considering what is hereafter to befall me; and that I have nothing to do, but to follow my inclinations without reflection or disquiet, in doing all that, which, if what men say of a miserable eternity prove true, will infallibly plunge me into it. It is possible I might find some light to clear up my doubts; but I shall not take a minute's pains, nor stir one foot in the search of it. On the contrary, I am resolved to treat those with scorn and derision who labour in this inquiry and care; and, so to run without fear or foresight, upon the trial of the grand event; permitting myself to be led softly on to death, utterly uncertain as to the eternal issue of my future condition.

In earnest, it is a glory to religion to have so unreasonable men for its professed enemies; and their opposition is of so little danger, that it serves to illustrate the principal truths which our religion teaches. For the main scope of Christian faith is to establish those two principles, the corruption of nature, and the redemption by Jesus Christ. And these opposers, if they are of no use towards demonstrating the truth of the redemption, by the sanctity of their lives, yet are at least admirably useful in showing the corruption of nature, by so unnatural sentiments and suggestions.

Nothing is so important to any man as his own estate and condition; nothing so great, so amazing, as eternity. If, therefore, we find persons indifferent to the loss of their being, and to the danger of endless misery, it is impossible that this temper should be natural. They are quite other men in all other regards, they fear the smallest inconveniences, they see them as they approach, and feel them if they arrive, and he who passeth days and nights in chagrin or despair, for the loss of an employment, or for some imaginary blemish in his honour, is the very same mortal who knows that he must lose all by death, and yet remains without disquiet, resentment, or emotion. This wonderful insensibility, with respect to things of the most fatal consequence, in a heart so nicely sensible of the meanest trifles, is an astonishing prodigy, and unintelligible enchantment, a supernatural blindness and infatuation.

A man in a close dungeon, who knows not whether sentence of death has passed upon him, who is allowed but one hour's space to inform himself concerning it, and that one hour sufficient, in case it have passed, to obtain its reverse, would act contrary to nature and sense, should he make use of this hour not to procure information, but to pursue his vanity or sport. And yet such is the condition of the persons whom we are now describing; only with this difference, that the evils with which they are every moment threatened, do infinitely surpass the bare loss of life, and that transient punishment which the prisoner is supposed to apprehend: yet they run thoughtlessly upon the precipice, having only cast a veil over their eyes, to hinder them from discerning it, and divert themselves with the officiousness of such as charitably warn them of their danger.

Thus not the zeal alone of those who heartily seek God, demonstrates the truth of religion, but likewise the blindness of those who utterly forbear to seek him, and who pass their days under so horrible a neglect. There must needs be a strange turn and revolution in human nature, before men can submit to such a condition, much more ere they can applaud and value themselves upon it. For supposing them to have obtained an absolute certainty, that there was no fear after death, but of falling into nothing, ought not this to be the subject rather of despair, than of jollity? And is it not therefore the highest pitch of senseless extravagance, while we want this certainty, to glory in our doubt and distrust?

And yet, after all, it is too visible, that man has so far declined from his original nature, and as it were departed from himself, to nourish in his heart a secret seed-plot of joy, springing up from the libertine reflections. This brutal ease, or indolence, between the fear of hell, and annihilation, carries somewhat so tempting in it, that not only those who have the misfortune to be sceptically inclined, but even those who cannot unsettle their judgment, do yet esteem it reputable to take up a counterfeit diffidence. For we may observe the largest part of the herd to be of this latter kind, false pretenders to infidelity, and mere hypocrites in atheism. There are persons whom we have heard declare, that the genteel way of the world consists in thus acting the bravo. This is that which they term throwing off the yoke, and which the greater number of them profess, not so much out of opinion, as out of gallantry and complaisance.

Yet, if they have the least reserve of common sense, it will not be difficult to make them apprehend, how miserably they abuse themselves by laying so false a foundation of applause and esteem. For this is not the way to raise a character, even with worldly men, who, as they are able to pass a shrewd judgment on things, so they easily discern that the only method of succeeding in our temporal affairs, is to prove ourselves honest, faithful, prudent, and capable of advancing the interest of our friends; because men naturally love nothing but that which some way contributes to their use and benefit. But now what benefit can we any way derive from hearing a man confess that he has eased himself of the burden of religion; that he believes no God, as the witness and inspector of his conduct; that he considers himself as absolute master of what he does, and accountable for it only to his own mind? Will he fancy that we shall be hence induced to repose a greater degree of confidence in him hereafter? or to depend on his comfort, his advice, or assistance, in the necessities of life? Can he imagine us to take any great delight or complacency when he tells us, that he doubts whether our very soul be any thing more than a little wind and smoke? Nay, when he tells it us with an air of assurance, and a voice that testifies the contentment of his heart? Is this a thing to be spoken of with pleasantry? Or ought it not rather be lamented with the deepest sadness, as the most melancholic reflection that can strike our thoughts.

If they would compose themselves to serious consideration, they must perceive the method in which they are engaged to be so very ill chosen, so repugnant to gentility, and so remote even from that good air and grace which they pursue, that, on the contrary, nothing can more effectually expose them to the contempt and aversion of mankind, or mark them out for persons defective in parts and judgment. And, indeed, should we demand from them an account of their sentiments, and of the reasons which they have to entertain this suspicion in religious matters, what they offered would appear so miserably weak and trifling, as rather to confirm us in our belief. This is no more than what one of their own fraternity told them, with great smartness, on such an occasion. If you continue (says he) to dispute at this rate, you will infallibly make me a Christian. And the gentleman was in the right: for who would not tremble to find himself embarked in the same cause, with so forlorn, so despicable companions?

And thus it is evident, that they who wear no more than the outward mask of these principles, are the most unhappy counterfeits in the world; inasmuch as they are obliged to put a continual force and constraint on their genius, only that they may render themselves the most impertinent of all men living.

If they are heartily and sincerely troubled at their want of light, let them not dissemble the disease. Such a confession cannot be reputed shameful; for there is really no shame, but in being shameless. Nothing betrays so much weakness of soul, as not to apprehend the misery of man, while living without God in the world: nothing is a surer token of extreme baseness of spirit, than not to hope for the reality of eternal promises: no man is so stigmatized a coward, as he that acts the bravo against heaven. Let them therefore leave these impieties to those who are born with so unhappy a judgment, as to be capable of entertaining them in earnest. If they cannot be Christian men, let them, however, be men of honour: and let them, in conclusion, acknowledge, that there are but two sorts of persons who deserve to be styled reasonable, either those who serve God with all their heart, because they know him; or those who seek him with all their heart, because as yet they know him not.

If then there are persons who sincerely inquire after God, and who, being truly sensible of their misery, affectionately desire to be rescued from it; it is to these alone that we can in justice afford our labour and service, for their direction in finding out that light of which they feel the want.

But as for those who live without either knowing God, or endeavouring to know him, they look on themselves as so little deserving their own care, that they cannot but be unworthy the care of others: and it requires all the charity of the religion which they despise, not to despise them to such a degree, as even to abandon them to their own folly: but since the same religion obliges us to consider them, while they remain in this life, as still capable of God's enlightening grace; and to acknowledge it as very possible, that, in the course of a few days, they may be replenished with a fuller measure of faith than we now enjoy; and we ourselves, on the other side, fall into the depths of their present blindness and misery; we ought to do for them, what we desire should be done to us in their case; to entreat them that they would take pity on themselves, and would at least advance a step or two forward, if perchance they may come into the light. For which end it is wished, that they would employ, in the perusal of this piece, some few of those hours, which they spend so unprofitably in other pursuits. It is possible they may gain somewhat by the reading; at least, they cannot be great losers: but if any shall apply themselves to it, with perfect sincerity, and with an unfeigned desire of knowing the truth, I despair not of their satisfaction, or of their being convinced by so many proofs of our divine religion, as they will here find laid together. *Mons. Pascal.*

§ 116. *On the degree of Evidence that ought to be expected in Religion.*

As, on the one side, it is a great error, in all cases, to expect such evidence, as the nature of the subject renders impossible; so it is as weak, on the other side, to lay the stress of important truths on such evidence, as is in its own nature unsatisfactory and precarious: or to assert, with great assurance, what can no way be proved, even by that sort of evidence which is proper for the subject in debate. An instance of the first sort we have in Autolicus, an heathen, in his debates with Theophilus of Antioch; who appears weakly to have insisted upon seeing the God of the Christians, ere he would believe his existence; while one of the known attributes of that God is, that he is invisible. And almost equally preposterous would any philosophic sceptic now be, who should require the sight of the air in which we breathe, before he would believe that there was such an element at all. Whereas it is clear, that the air may be demonstrated to be sufficiently sensible and real, by a thousand experiments; while yet none of those experiments can render it visible to us: just as the existence of a supreme Being may be demonstrated by innumerable arguments, although none of those arguments imply even the possibility of his being properly seen by any of his creatures. But then, that we may keep a mean here, and may neither on one side, expect in our religious inquiries, overbearing, or strictly mathematic evidence, such as is impossible to be denied or doubted of by any; which would render the constant design of Providence, already stated, entirely ineffectual, and force both good and bad to be believers, without any regard to their qualifications and temper of mind: nor, on the other side, may we depend on such weak and precarious arguments, as are not really sufficient or satisfactory to even fair, honest, and impartial men. I intend here to consider what that degree of evidence is which ought to be insisted on; without which we are not, and with which we are obliged to acquiesce in divine matters. Now this degree of evidence I take to be that, and no other, which upright judges are determined by in all the important affairs of estate and life, that come before them; and according to which, they ever aim to give sentence in their courts of judicature. I choose to instance in this judicial evidence, and these judicial determinations especially, because the persons concerned in such matters are, by long use, and the nature of their employment, generally speaking, the best and most sagacious discoverers of truth, and those that judge the most unbiassedly and fairly, concerning sufficient or insufficient evidence, of all others. Such upright judges then never expect strictly undeniable or mathematic evidence; which they know is, in human affairs, absolutely impossible to be had: they do not require that the witnesses they examine should be infallible, or impeccable, which they are sensible would be alike wild and ridiculous; yet do they expect full, sufficient, or convincing evidence; and such as is plainly superior to what is alleged on the other side: and they require that the witnesses they believe, be, so far as they are able to discover, of a good character, upright, and faithful. Nor do they think it too much trouble to use their utmost skill and sagacity in discovering where the truth lies; how far the witnesses agree with or contradict each other; and which way the several circumstances may be best compared, so as to find out any forgery, or detect any knavery which may be suspected in any branches of the evidence before them. They do not themselves pretend to judge of the reality or obligation of any ancient laws, or acts of parliament, from their own mere guesses or inclinations, but from the authenticness of the records which contain them; and though they are not able always to see the reason, or occasion, or wisdom of such laws, or acts of parliament; yet do they, upon full external evidence that they are genuine, allow and execute the same, as considering themselves to be not legislators, but judges; and owning that ancient laws, and ancient facts, are to be known not by guesses or supposals, but by the production of ancient records, and original evidence for their reality. Nor in such their procedure do they think themselves guilty in their sentences, if at any time afterwards they discover that they have been imposed upon by false witnesses, or forged records; supposing, I mean, that they are conscious, that they did their utmost to discover the truth, and went exactly by the best evidence that lay before them; as knowing they have done their duty, and must in such a case be blameless before God and man, notwithstanding the mistake in the sentences themselves. Now this is that procedure which I would earnestly recommend to those that have a mind to inquire to good purpose into revealed religion; that after they have taken care to purge themselves from all those vices which will make it their great interest that religion should be false; after they have resolved upon honesty, impartiality, and modesty, which are virtues by the law of nature; after they have devoutly implored the divine assistance and blessing on this their important undertaking; which is a duty likewise they are obliged to by the same law of nature; that after all this preparation, I say, they will set about the inquiry itself, in the very same manner that has been already described, and that all our upright judges proceed by in the discovery of truth. Let them spare for no pains, but consult all the originals, whenever they can come at them; and let them use all that diligence, sagacity, and judgment, which they are masters of, in order to see what real external evidence there is for the truth of the facts on which the Jewish and Christian religions do depend. I here speak of the truth of facts, as the surest way to determine us in this inquiry; because all the world, I think, owns, that if those facts be true, these institutions of religion must also be true, or be derived from God; and that no particular difficulties, as to the reasons of several laws, or the conduct of Providence in several cases, which those institutions no where pretend to give us a full account of, can be sufficient to set aside the convincing evidence which the truth of such facts brings along with it. For example: those who are well satisfied of the truth of the Mosaic history; of the ten miraculous plagues with which the God of Israel smote the Egyptians; of the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, while the Israelites were miraculously conducted through the same; and of the amazing manner wherein the decalogue was given by God to that people at Mount Sinai; will, for certain, believe that the Jewish religion was in the main derived from God, though he should find several occasional passages in the Jewish sacred books, which he could not account for, and several ritual laws given that nation, which he could not guess at the reasons why they were given them. And the case is the very same as to the miraculous resurrection, and glorious ascension of our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ, with regard to the New Testament; on which account I reckon that the truth of such facts is to be principally inquired into, when we have a mind to satisfy ourselves in the verity of the Jewish and Christian religions. And if it be alleged that some of these facts are too remote to afford us any certain means of discovery at this distance of time; I answer, that then we are to select such of those facts as we can examine, and to search into the acknowledgment or denial of those that are ancienter, in the oldest testimonies now extant; into the effects and consequences, and standing memorials of such facts in after ages, and how far they were real, and allowed to be so; and, in short, we are to determine concerning them, by the best evidence we can now have; and not let a bare suspicion, or a wish that things had been otherwise, overbalance our real evidence of facts in any case whatsoever. I do not mean that our inquirer is to have no regard to internal characters, or the contents of the Jewish and Christian revelations; or that he is not to examine into that also in the general, before he admits even the proof from miracles themselves; because what pretended miracles soever are wrought for the support of idolatry or wickedness, for the establishment of notions contrary to the divine attributes, or of an immoral, or profane, or cruel religion, though they may prove such a religion to be supernatural, yet will they only prove that it comes from wicked demons, or evil spirits, and not from a God of purity and holiness, and so will by no means prove it divine, or worthy of our reception. But then it is, for the main, so well known, that the Jewish and Christian institutions do agree to the divine attributes, and do tend to purity, holiness, justice, and charity; and are opposite to all immorality, profaneness, and idolatry, that I think there will not need much examination in so clear a case; and that, by consequence, our main inquiry is to be as to the truth of the facts thereto relating. And in this case, I fear not to invite all our sceptics and unbelievers, to use their greatest nicety, their entire skill, their shrewdest abilities, and their utmost sagacity in this inquiry; being well assured, from my own observations in this matter, that the proper result of such an exact historical inquiry will be as plainly and evidently on the side of revealed religion. *Whiston.*

§ 117. *Reasons for believing the Book of Revelation to be True.*

Some of the principal reasons which make me believe the Bible to be true, are the following:

1. The Bible lays the law of nature for its foundation; and all along supports and assists natural religion; as every true revelation ought to do.

2. Astronomy, and the rest of our certain mathematic sciences, do confirm the accounts of Scripture, so far as they are concerned.

3. The most ancient and best historical accounts now known, do, generally speaking, confirm the accounts of Scripture, so far as they are concerned.

4. The more learning has increased, the more certain in general do the Scripture accounts appear, and its difficult places are more cleared thereby.

5. There are, or have been generally, standing memorials preserved, of the certain truths of the principal historical facts, which were constant evidences for the certainty of them.

6. Neither the Mosaical law, nor the Christian religion, could possibly have been received and established without such miracles as the sacred history contains.

7. Although the Jews all along hated and persecuted the prophets of God, yet were they forced to believe they were true prophets, and their writings of divine inspiration.

8. The ancient and present state of the Jewish nation, are strong arguments for the truth of their law, and of the Scripture prophecies relating to them.

9. The ancient and present states of the Christian church are also strong arguments for the truth of the gospel, and of the Scripture prophecies relating thereto.

10. The miracles whereon the Jewish and Christian religion are founded, were of old owned to be true by their very enemies.

11. The sacred writers, who lived in times and places so remote from one another, do yet all carry on one and the same grand design, viz. that of the salvation of mankind, by the worship of, and obedience to the one true God, in and through the King Messiah; which, without a divine conduct, could never have been done.

12. The principal doctrines of the Jewish and Christian religion are agreeable to the most ancient traditions of all other nations.

13. The difficulties relating to this religion are not such as affect the truth of the facts, but the conduct of Providence, the reasons of which the sacred writers never pretended fully to know, or to reveal to mankind.

14. Natural religion, which is yet so certain in itself, is not without such difficulties, as to the conduct of Providence, as are objected to revelation.

15. The sacred history has the greatest marks of truth, honesty, and impartiality, of all other histories whatsoever; and withal has none of the known marks of knavery and imposture.

16. The predictions of Scripture have been still fulfilled in the several ages of the world whereto they belong.

17. No opposite systems of the universe, or schemes of divine revelation, have any tolerable pretences to be true, but those of the Jews and Christians.

These are the plain and obvious arguments which persuade me of the truth of the Jewish and Christian revelations. *Whiston.*

§ 118. *The divine Legation of Moses.*

The evidence the Jews had to believe the several matters related by Moses, preceding the deliverance from Egypt, was, so far as we know, no more than Moses's word; whose credit was sufficiently established, by the testimonies given to him by the Deity; but, at the same time, it is not certain that they had not some distinct tradition concerning these things. But, as to his authority, and the authority of the laws and institutions given by him, they had, and their children, and we who take it from their children, have the strongest evidence the nature of the thing is capable of. For,

1. The whole people, an infinite multitude, were witnesses of all the miracles wrought preceding the deliverance from Egypt, and of the final miracle that achieved their deliverance; in memory whereof, the passover, an annual solemnity, was instituted, with the strongest injunctions to acquaint their children with the cause of that observance, and to mark that night throughout all their generations for ever.

2. The whole people were witnesses to the miracle in passing the Red Sea, and sung that hymn which Moses composed on that occasion,

which was preserved for the use of their children.

3. The whole people were witnesses to the dreadful promulgation of the law from Sinai, with which they were also to acquaint their children; and the feast of Pentecost was annually to be observed on the day on which that law was given; besides that the very tables in which the ten commands were written, were deposited in the Ark, and remained, at least, till the building of Solomon's temple, and probably till the destruction of it.

4. The whole people were witnesses to the many miracles wrought, during the space of forty years, in the wilderness: to the pillar of fire and cloud, to the manna, quails, &c. a sample of the manna remained to future generations: and they were directed to relate what they saw to their children.

5. The whole people were witnesses to the framing and building of the Ark and Tabernacle; they were all contributors to it; they saw the cloud fill and rest upon it, and they assisted at the services performed there; and, to commemorate this, as well as their sojourning in tents in the wilderness, the annual Feast of Tabernacles was appointed, which in succeeding years, they were to explain to their children.

As these things were absolutely sufficient to satisfy the children of Israel, then in being, touching the authority and obligation of this law, several things were added to enforce the observance, and to preserve the memory and evidence of what was to be observed.

1. The law was by Moses, at the command of God, put into writing, for the greater certainty, as well as all the directions for making the Ark, the Cherubim, the Tabernacle, the priest's garments, &c. and all the rules of government, judicature, &c. with every other circumstance revealed, for directing the faith and the conduct of the nation.

2. The law was to be preserved, perused, and attended to, in the most careful manner; the priests, who were to judge in questions relating to it, must be well versed in it; the king, who was to rule over the nation, was to write out a copy of it for himself, and to peruse it continually; and the people were to write out passages of it, and to wear them by way of signs, upon their hands, and of frontlets, between their eyes, and to write them upon the post of their doors, &c. And they were to teach their children the most notable parts of it, and particularly to instruct them in the miracles attending the deliverance from Egypt, as they sat in their house, as they walked by the way, as they lay down, and as they rose up, &c.

3. Besides the authority that promulgated the law, there was a solemn covenant and agreement between God and the people, whereby the people became bound to keep, preserve, and observe this law, and all that was contained in it: and God became bound to be the God of the Israelitish people, to protect, and prosper them; and this covenant, towards the end of their sojourning in the wilderness, was solemnly renewed.

4. The particulars of this covenant, upon God's part, were, to give the people the good land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, to preserve, and protect them in it; to give them perpetual endurance, and victory over their and his enemies; to prosper them in all their labours; to give them the increase of their fields, and flocks; and to make them a great, a happy, and a flourishing people; on condition that they kept and obeyed his law.

5. The particulars on the part of the people, were, to serve Jehovah, and no other god, in the way directed by the law; to preserve, observe,

and obey the law carefully, and exactly; and if they failed or transgressed, to submit and consent to the severe sanction of the law and covenant, which, in many instances, was, to individuals transgressing, death (to be cut off from the people,) and to the bulk of the people, destruction, captivity, dispersion, blindness, madness, &c. besides the forfeiture of all the good promises.

6. Besides the other blessings, and pre-eminences, God was, by some special visible symbol of his presence, to reside continually with the people; first, in the Tabernacle, which was made in the wilderness for that end, and afterwards in the temple; whence he was to give judgment and directions, and to answer prayers, and accept of vows.

7. This covenant was also reduced into writing, and was the tenure by which the Israelites held the land of Canaan, and on which all their hopes were founded: wherefore it must in all generations be considered by them as a thing of no small moment.

As God was the head of this state, and as the people held immediately their land of him; so he made several regulations for holding that property, that are very remarkable.

1. The land was by his command divided into twelve lots, one for each tribe; and they were put in possession accordingly, to the exclusion of the tribe of Levi, who for their portion had no more than what attended the service of God's house, and some cities with suburbs, dispersed amongst other tribes.

2. Not only were the descendants of each tribe to enjoy, in exclusion of other tribes, their own lot, but the particular fields and parcels, within each tribe, were to remain for ever with the respective families that first possessed them, and on failure of the issue of the possessor, to the nearest of that family: hence all lands sold returned at the jubilee to the proprietor, or his nearest a-kin; he who had a right to revenge blood might redeem.

3. This right of blood, depending upon knowledge of descent and genealogy, made it absolutely necessary for the children of Israel to keep very exact records and proofs of their descent; not to mention the expectation they had of something surprisingly singular from the many promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that the blessing to mankind should spring from their Seed; and, in tracing their genealogy, we see they were very critical upon their return from Babylon: so that, before their records were disturbed by the captivity, it could not well be otherwise, but that every body of any note amongst the Jews could tell you the name of his ancestor, who first had the family-possession, in the days of Joshua, and how many degrees, and by what descent he was removed from him. And as these first possessors, pursuant to the custom of the nation, must have been described by their father's name, it is highly probable, they could have quoted by name that ancestor who saw the miracles in Egypt, who saw the law given, who entered into the covenant, and who contributed to the setting up the Ark and Tabernacle.

4. The very surprising care taken by the Deity to keep the breed of the Jews pure and genuine, by the proofs of virginity, and by the miraculous waters of jealousy, is a circumstance that merits attention, and will easily induce a belief that descent and birth was a matter much minded amongst them. And,

5. The appointment and observance of the sabbatical year, and, after the seventh sabbatical year, a year of jubilee, for the general release of debts, lands, &c. is a circumstance of great moment, not only as these notable periods were useful towards the easy computation of

time, but as it made inquiry into titles, and consequently genealogy, necessary every fiftieth year; and as the cessation from culture every seventh year gave continual occasions for the Deity's displaying his power in increasing the crop of the sixth, pursuant to his promise.

Now, taking these circumstances together under consideration, could any human precaution have provided more means to keep up the memory and evidence of any fact? Could this have been done by human foresight or force? Has any thing like to it ever been in the world besides?

What could tend more to perpetuate the memory of any event, than to deliver a whole people, by public glorious miracles, from intolerable slavery? To publish a very extraordinary system of laws immediately from heaven? To put this law in writing together with the covenant for the obeying it? To make the tenure of the estates depend on the original division of the land, to men who saw the miracles, and first took possession, and on the proximity of relation, by descent to them? To appoint a return of lands every fiftieth year, which should give perpetual occasion to canvass those descents? To order a sabbath every seventh year for the land, the loss of which should be supplied by the preceding year's increase? And to select a whole tribe consisting of many thousands, to be the guardians, in some degree the judges and the executors of this law; who were barred from any portion of the land, in common with their brethren, and were contented with the contributions that came from the other tribes, without any fixed portion amongst them. This must keep up the belief and authority of that law amongst the descendants of that people, or nothing could: and if such a belief, under all these circumstances, prevailed amongst a people so constituted, that belief could not possibly proceed from imposture; because the very means provided, for proof of the truth, are so many checks against any possibility of imposition.

If any man will suggest that the law of the Jews is no more than human invention, and that the book of the law is a forgery; let him say when it was imposed upon that people, or at what period it could have possibly been imposed upon them, so as to gain belief, later than the period they mention, and under other circumstances than those they relate.

Could the whole people have been persuaded at any one period, by any impostor, that they were told severally by their fathers, and they by theirs, that the law was given with such circumstances, and under such promises and threats, if they were not really told so; or that they, throughout all their generations, had worn certain passages of the law by way of frontlets and signs, if it had not really been so?

Could the whole people have been persuaded to submit to the pain of death, upon all the offences which the law makes capital, unless their fathers had done so, upon the evidence of the authority of that law?

Could the whole people have been persuaded that they had kept exact genealogies, in order to entitle them to the blessing, and to the inheritances severally, unless they actually had done so?

Could the whole people believe that they had kept Passovers, Feasts of Tabernacles, &c. down from the date of the law, commemorative of the great events they relate to, unless they had really done so?

Could the children of Israel have been imposed on to receive an Ark, and a Tabernacle, then forged, and a complete set of service and liturgy, as descending from Moses by the direction of God, unless that Ark and that service had come to them from their ancestors, as authorized by God?

Could the whole people have submitted to pay tithe, first fruits, &c. upon any feigned revelation? Or, could the tribe of Levi, without divine authority, have submitted, not only to the being originally without a portion in Israel, but to the being incapable of any, in hopes of the contributions of the people; which, however large when the whole twelve tribes served at the same temple, became very scanty when ten of them withdrew their allegiance from heaven?

Could ever the book of the law, if consigned to the Levites, and promulgated, have been lost, so as to give room for new fictions? Or could a book of the law have been forged, if there was none precedent, and put upon the people, as a book that had been delivered to the Levites by Moses? If no book at all ever was delivered by him to them, what authority could be pretended for such a book?

Had a book been to be forged, in order to be received by the people, could it have contained so many scandalous reflections and accusations against the people, and so many fatal threats and predictions concerning them? And, if it had been so framed, could it have been received as authentic?

If the law, &c. was forged, it must have been before the days of David: because by the sacred hymns, in his time, the publication of the law is celebrated, and the law was observed: and yet the time between the entry of Israel into the land, and the reign of David, being but about four hundred years, is too short a space for forgetting the real manner of the entry, and forging another, to be received by a people, whose genealogy was so fixed, and whose time was reckoned by such periods.

If the book of the law was not forged before the reign of David, it could not possibly be forged after, unless the whole history of the kingdom, the Tabernacle, the Temple, and all the sacred hymns and prophecies, are looked upon as one complete fiction; because the Tabernacle, the Temple, the economy of the kingdom, the sacred hymns, and all the other writings said to be sacred, bear formal relation to the law.

But, that all these things were not suppositious, is evident from the anxious zeal that possessed the Jews who returned from the captivity; from their solicitude to restore the city, the Temple and the sacred service; from their strict examination of their genealogies, and scrupulous care to comply with the law.

The space between the captivity and the return was so short that some who saw the first Temple, saw also the second, and many who were themselves, or at least whose fathers had been, officers in the first Temple, returned to the service of the second: so that it is utterly impossible that the history, the liturgy, the service of the Jews, preceding the return, should be a fiction, at least that it should be a fiction earlier than the return.

And the story of this nation, from that period, falls in so much with the history of the rest of the world; their sacred books have been so soon after that translated, and they have been so famous for the tenaciousness of their laws, that there is no possibility of suspecting that their law and history was forged later than the return. And, if it is granted, that the devotions, the precepts, the institutions, and rites and ceremonies of this law, and the great lines of their history, are not forged; one needs as to the present consideration, be but little solicitous concerning the accuracy of the copy of the books of the law, and of the other sacred books; and whether there may not have been some mistake and interpolations. It is not with one or one hundred words or sentences we have to do; it is with the system of the sacrificature, and the other religious laws and services of the Jews, and with the political establishment of their theocratical government, and the authority for the establishment of both, that we have, at present, concern.

For, if such a system of religious services and ceremonies was revealed and commanded by God; if, for the greater certainty, it was reduced into writing by Moses, by divine direction; if such a model of government was framed, as is manifestly calculated for keeping up the observance of those services, and preserving the memory of the institution, and keeping up the authority of the book wherein it was recorded; and if the nation, to whom this institution was delivered, have preserved it accordingly: complete evidence thence arises to us of the divinity of the institution; and leads to a demonstrative proof of the truth of the Christian religion, to which all the emblematical institutions tend, and in which they centre.

Lord Forbes.

§ 119. *On the Old and New Testament.*

The Old Testament hath, by the general consent of learned men, all the marks of purest antiquity; there being nothing in the world which in this respect is equal to it, or which may pretend to be compared with it; all other the most ancient monuments of antiquity coming short of it by many ages. It was written in the first and most ancient language; from which the very alphabets and letters of all other languages were derived.

This book contains, as the most ancient, so the most exact story of the world, the propagation of men, and the dispersing of families into the several parts of the earth.

And though this book were written in several ages and places, by several persons; yet doth the doctrine of it accord together, with a most excellent harmony, without any dissonance or inconsistency.

And for the manner of delivering the things contained in it, it is so solemn, reverend, and majestic, so exactly suited to the nature of things, as may justly provoke our wonder and acknowledgment of its divine original.

And as for the New Testament; those various correspondences, which it bears to the chief things of the Old Testament, may sufficiently evidence that mutual relation, dependence, and affinity which there is between them. That in such an age there was such a man as Christ, who preached such a doctrine, wrought many miracles, suffered an ignominious death, and was afterwards worshipped as God, having abundance of disciples and followers, at first chiefly amongst the vulgar, but awhile after, amongst several of the most wise and learned men; who in a short space of time did propagate their belief and doctrine into the most remote parts of the world: I say, all this is for the truth of the matter of fact, not so much as doubted or called into question, by Julian, or Celsus, or the Jews themselves, or any other of the most avowed enemies of Christianity. But we have it by as good certainty as any rational man can wish or hope for, that is, by universal testimony, as well of enemies as friends.

And if these things were so, as to the matter of fact, the common principles of nature will assure us, that it is not consistent with the nature of the Deity, his truth, wisdom, or justice, to work such miracles in confirmation of a lie or imposture.

Nor can it be reasonably objected

that these miracles are now ceased; and we have not any such extraordinary way to confirm the truth of our religion. It is sufficient that they were upon the first plantation of it, when men were to be instituted and confirmed in that new doctrine. And there may be as much of the wisdom of providence in the forbearing them now, as in working them then; it being not reasonable to think that the universal laws of nature, by which things are to be regularly guided in their natural course, should frequently, or upon every little occasion, be violated or disordered.

To which may be added that wonderful way whereby this religion hath been propagated in the world, with much simplicity and infirmity in the first publishers of it; without arms, or faction, or favour of great men, or the persuasions of philosophers or orators; only by the naked proposal of plain evident truth, with a firm resolution of suffering and dying for it, by which it hath subdued all kind of persecutions and oppositions, and surmounted whatever discouragement or resistance could be laid in its way, or made against it.

The excellency of the things contained in the Gospel are also so suitable to a rational being, as no other religion or profession whatsoever hath thought of, or so expressly insisted upon.

Some of the learned Heathens have placed the happiness of man in the external sensual delights of this world.

Others of the wiser Heathens have spoken sometimes doubtfully concerning a future state, and therefore have placed the reward of virtue, in the doing of virtuous things. Virtue is its own reward. Wherein, though there be much of truth, yet it doth not afford encouragement enough for the vast desires of a rational soul.

Others who have owned a state after this life, have placed the happiness of it in gross and sensual pleasures, feasts and gardens, and company, and other such low and gross enjoyments.

Whereas the doctrine of Christianity doth fix it upon things that are much more spiritual and sublime; the beatific vision, a clear unerring understanding, a perfect tranquillity of mind, a conformity to God, a perpetual admiring and praising of him; than which the mind of man cannot fancy any thing that is more excellent or desirable.

As to the duties that are enjoined in reference to divine worship, they are so full of sanctity and spiritual devotion, as may shame all the pompous solemnities of other religions, in their costly sacrifices, their dark wild mysteries, and external observances. Whereas this refers chiefly to the holiness of the mind, resignation to God, love of him, dependence upon him, submission to his will, endeavouring to be like him.

And as for the duties of the second table, which concern our mutual conversation towards one another, it allows nothing that is hurtful or noxious, either to ourselves or others; forbids all kind of injury or revenge; commands to overcome evil with good; to pray for enemies and persecutors; doth not admit of any mental, much less any coporeal uncleanness; doth not tolerate any immodest or uncomely word or gesture; forbids us to wrong others in their goods and possessions, or to mispend our own; requires us to be very tender both of our own and other men's reputation; in brief, it enjoins nothing but what is helpful, and useful, and good for mankind. Whatever any philosophers have prescribed concerning their moral virtues of temperance, and prudence, and patience, and the duties of several relations, is here enjoined, in a far more eminent, sublime, and comprehensive manner: besides such examples and incitations to piety as are not to be paralleled elsewhere: the whole system of its doctrines being transcendently excellent, and so exactly comformable to the highest, purest reason, that in those very things wherein it goes beyond the rules of moral philosophy, we cannot in our best judgment but consent to submit to it.

In brief; it doth in every respect so fully answer the chief scope and design of religion in giving all imaginable honour and submission to the Deity, promoting the good of mankind, satisfying and supporting the mind of man with the highest kind of enjoyments, that a rational soul can wish or hope for, as no other religion or profession whatsoever can pretend unto.

Infidels pretend want of clear and infallible evidence for the truth of Christianity; than which nothing can be more absurd and unworthy of a rational man. For let it be but impartially considered; what is it that such men would have? Do they expect mathematical proof and certainty in moral things?

Why, they may as well expect to see with their ears, and hear with their eyes; such kind of things being altogether as disproportioned to such kind of proofs, as the objects of the several senses are to one another. The arguments or proof to be used in several matters are of various and different kinds, according to the nature of the things to be proved. And it will become every rational man to yield to such proofs as the nature of the thing which he inquires about is capable of: and that man is to be looked upon as froward and contentious, who will not rest satisfied in such kind of evidence as is counted sufficient, either by all others, or by most, or by the wisest men.

If we suppose God to have made any revelation of his will to mankind, can any man propose or fancy any better way for conveying down to posterity the certainty of it, than that clear and universal tradition which we have for the history of the Gospel? And must not that man be very unreasonable, who will not be content with as much evidence for an ancient book or matter of fact, as any thing of that nature is capable of? If it be only infallible and mathematical certainty that can settle his mind, why should he believe that he was born of such parents, and belongs to such a family? 'Tis possible men might have combined together to delude him with such a tradition. Why may he not as well think that he was born a Prince and not a subject, and consequently deny all duties of subjection and obedience to those above him? There is nothing so wild and extravagant, to which men may not expose themselves by such a kind of nice and scrupulous incredulity.

Whereas, if to the inquiries about religion a man would but bring with him the same candour and ingenuity, the same readiness to be instructed, which he doth to the study of human arts and sciences, that is, a mind free from violent prejudices and a desire of contention; it can hardly be imagined, but that he must be convinced and subdued by those clear evidences, which offer themselves to every inquisitive mind, concerning the truth of the principles of religion in general, and concerning the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the Christian religion.

Bishop Wilkins.

§ 120. *Chief design, and principal intention of the civil government of the Hebrews.*

To lay down a true plan of the Hebrew government, it will be requisite previously to consider, what particular views the lawgiver might have in it. If any particular ends were designed, to promote which the plan of the government itself was to be adjusted; those designs will help to explain many parts and constitutions of the government, as it will show the great wisdom of the legislator, which has made the plan in its several parts most fit, and proper to serve, and secure those ends.

The Hebrew government appears not only designed to serve the common and general ends of all good governments; to protect the property, liberty, safety, and peace of the several members of the community; in which the true happiness and prosperity of national societies will always consist; but moreover to be an holy people to Jehovah, and a kingdom of priests. For thus Moses is directed to tell the children of Israel, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore if you will hear my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." We learn what this covenant was in a farther account of it. "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers, and all the men of Israel; that you should enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob: for ye know," adds Moses, "how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the nations which ye passed by, and ye have seen their abominations and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold which were among them, lest there should be among you, man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of these nations."

Without any inquiry into the critical meaning of these expressions severally, every one may easily see this general intention of them; that the covenant of Jehovah with the Hebrew people, and their oath by which they bound their allegiance to Jehovah their God and king, was, that they should receive and obey the laws which he should appoint as their supreme governor, with a particular engagement to keep themselves from the idolatry of the nations round about them, whether the idolatry they had seen while they dwelt in the land of Egypt, or had observed in the nations by which they passed into the promised land. In keeping this allegiance to Jehovah, as their immediate and supreme Lord, they were to expect the blessings of God's immediate and particular protection in the security of their liberty, peace, and prosperity, against all attempts of their idolatrous neighbours; but if they should break their allegiance to Jehovah, or forsake the covenant of Jehovah, by going and serving other gods and worshipping them, then they should forfeit these blessings of God's protection, and the anger of Jehovah should be kindled against the land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book.

The true sense then of this solemn transaction, between God and the Hebrew nation, which may be called the original contract of the Hebrew government, is to this purpose: If the Hebrews would voluntarily consent to receive Jehovah for their Lord and King, to keep his covenant and laws, to honour and worship him as the one true God, in opposition to all idolatry; then, though God as sovereign of the world rules over all the nations of the earth, and all the nations are under the general care of his providence, he would govern the Hebrew nation by peculiar laws of his particular appointment, and bless it with a more immediate and particular protection; he would secure to them the invaluable privileges of the true religion, together with liberty, peace, and prosperity, as a favoured people above all other nations. It is for very wise reasons you may observe, that temporal blessings and evils are made so much use of in this constitution, for these were the common and prevailing enticements to idolatry; but by thus taking them into the Hebrew constitution, as rewards to obedience, and punishments of disobedience, they became motives to true religion, instead of encouragements to idolatry.

The idolatrous nations worshipped subordinate beings, whom they owned subject to the Supreme; but they believed they had the immediate direction of the blessings of life; that they gave health, long life, fruitful seasons, plenty, and prosperity. This, we are told by Maimonides, was a doctrine taught by the Sabians in their books, as well as in their instructions to the people.

One of the oldest of the prophets has so fully expressed this reason of the Hebrew constitution, that we need no further evidence of it. "For their mother hath played the harlot, she that conceived them hath done shamefully; for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool, and my flax, mine oil, and my drink. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof; and will recover my wool and my flax, given to cover her nakedness."

The prophet Jeremiah gives the same reason why the Jews fell into the idolatrous practice of burning incense to the queen of heaven: "But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouths to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done; we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil; but since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine."

This common doctrine of idolatry, that the several blessings of life came from some demon or idol, to whom the authority and power of bestowing temporal blessings were committed, was of so general and powerful influence, that it became the wisdom of an institution designed to preserve the faith and worship of the one true God, against idolatry, to assert that God was the author of every blessing of life, that he had not parted with the administration of providence, or given over the disposal of those blessings to any subordinate beings whatsoever; so that health, long life, plenty, and all kinds of prosperity, were to be sought for, from him, as his gift, and only from his blessing and protection.

Whoever has just notions of the great evils of idolatry to the dishonour of the supreme Sovereign and Governor of the world, to the corruption of the essential principles of true religion and virtuous practice, as idolatry directed so many barbarous, immoral, and inhuman rites, and encouraged such enormous acts of vice, as acts of religion, of which some or other of the idols they worshipped were examples, and were esteemed to patronise them; it will appear to them a design worthy the goodness, as well as the wisdom of God, to put some stop to such a dangerous evil: especially when it was so general and prevailing, that all flesh had corrupted its way, and all the nations of the earth were running eagerly into it. Even the Egyptians, a people so famed for wisdom and good understanding, were as senseless and as corrupt in their idolatry, as any of their neighbours. The Hebrews themselves, whatever former care had been taken to preserve the knowledge of the true God and true religion in the family of Abraham, were so addicted to this common corruption of religion, and were so ready to fall into it, that there seemed no other way left to put any stop to the progress of idolatry any where, or to preserve the true religion in any people, but by some constitution formed on this plan, and which might effectually carry on this design in the several parts of it. And this the goodness and wisdom of God made a principal design in the constitution of the Jewish government.

More effectually to answer this chief design, there was another subordinate intention in the constitution of this government. It was of no small consequence to keep this nation separate from other nations, and from such intercourse with idolaters, as might end in an apostacy from their own religion to the idolatry of their neighbours. There is then a law in general given by Moses, in which he is directed to say in God's name to the children of Israel, "I am the Lord your God, after the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances, ye shall do my judgments and keep my ordinances to walk herein; I am Jehovah your God."

Farther, Moses having recited the many and great abominations committed by the Canaanites, on the loss of the right knowledge of the one true God and of the true religion; and through the corruption of idolatrous doctrines and practices, it is added; "defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled, which I cast out before you." And again; "therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs which were committed before you, that ye defile not yourselves therein; I am Jehovah your God." For the same purpose it is repeated; "and ye shall not walk in the manners of the nations which I cast out before you, for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them; but I have said unto you, ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it; a land that floweth with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God which hath separated you from other people, and ye shall be holy unto me; for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from other people that ye should be mine."

It had appeared by notorious examples, how easily the Hebrews themselves were to be enticed into idolatry, by frequenting the company of idolaters, and by conversing too much and too familiarly with them, while Israel abode in Shittim; "the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and they called the people to the sacrifice of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods:" so easy was the passage from feasting with them on their sacrifices, to joining with them in their idolatry. "Thus Israel joined himself to Baal-peor."

Such an example of prevailing idolatry, is justly given, as a sufficient reason for a careful separation of the Hebrew people from idolatrous neighbours, in order to prevent so very dangerous temptations in future times. Moses therefore thus exhorts Israel, "your eyes have seen what the Lord did, because of Baal-peor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you; but ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God, are alive every one of you this day. Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding, in the sight of all the nations which shall hear of all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a great and understanding people."

Among the laws here spoken of, there are some, the wisdom of which appear principally, if not solely, as they were chosen and commanded to this end, to separate the Hebrews from their idolatrous neighbours, by a prohibition of every idolatrous rite. The law itself for prohibiting intermarriages with idolaters expressly gives this reason for it, "Neither shall you make marriages with them, thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son; for they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you and destroy thee suddenly."

Many other laws, which at first view seem to be of small importance and concern, for the enacting of which some look for no reason at all, but the alone will of the law-giver, will appear, in this view, of concern and importance, sufficient for the wisdom of God to take notice of, when he gave his laws to this nation. The most judicious of the Hebrew doctors has very well explained several of the Mosaical laws upon this single consideration.

He gives this general reason for many laws, that they were made to keep men from idolatry, and such false opinions as are a-kin to idolatry; such as the pretences to incantations, divinations, foretelling things by the stars, or by the possession of some spirit or demon, or consulting with such persons. He farther justly observes, that such things as are supposed to be effected by any magic actions, or are founded on any dispositions or influences of the stars, necessarily induce men to reverence and worship them. He observes many of the magic rites consisted in certain gestures, actions, or the use of certain words, and mentions several examples of such superstitions; among the rest a remarkable rite to prevent a storm of hail.

However trifling some of the Mosaical laws may appear at first view, and unworthy the wisdom of God to enact them as laws; yet the case will appear quite otherwise, when they are considered as necessary provisions against the danger of idolatry.

The law for instance, that appoints, "ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard," will thus appear directions of importance, when it was to prevent a magical custom of the idolatrous priests, who made this sort of cutting off their hair and beards essential to their worship; and used them as things of consequence, in order to procure from their idols the several blessings they desired and prayed for. A prohibition of such idolatrous and magical ceremonies was not so trivial, or below the care of a wise law-giver, who had a design in the constitution of the Hebrew government, to keep that people from all idolatrous customs.

In like manner we may easily perceive a reason why the law should direct, "Neither shall a garment of linen and woollen come upon thee;" when we understand, that such mixed garments of linen and woollen were the proper habits of idolatrous priests; and which, according to the professed doctrines of their idolatrous worship, were supposed to have some powerful magical virtue in them.

For the same reason we can easily understand the wisdom of appointing by law, that "the woman shall not wear that which appertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are abomination to the Lord thy God;" when it was an idolatrous constitution of their neighbours, as Maimon found it in a magic book, that men ought to stand before the star of Venus in the flowered garments of women; and women were to put on the armour of men before the star of Mars, as bishop Patrick on the place truly represents its meaning.

The same idolatrous custom is observed by Macrobius, that men worshipped Venus in women's habits, and women in the habits of men.

There is no reason then, we see, to imagine that these laws, which were to distinguish the Hebrew people from the idolatrous nations, were made only out of hatred to their neighbours, and to all their customs and manners, good or bad, innocent as well as idolatrous. It appears on the contrary to be plainly quite another reason; it was from a wise care of their preservation from such idolatrous customs, as there was very great reason to fear, would prove a dangerous temptation to lead them into idolatry, and which were hardly to be used without it. All reflections, with how much confidence soever on the Hebrew laws, as if they were established upon no better motives than the hatred of their neighbours, will appear in this view groundless, and without all foundation, when the true reason shall appear so wise, so plain, and so natural.

These two views then, to preserve in the Hebrew nation the knowledge and worship of the one true God, and to preserve it from the spreading evils of idolatry, by separating it from the society of idolaters, by forbidding all use of idolatrous rites and customs, may be looked upon as considerable intentions in the constitution; according to which, we are to examine and to judge of the equity and wisdom of the constitution itself. Neither of which can be so well judged of, without taking these intentions into consideration. If we regard the Hebrew constitution only as an institution of religion and religious worship, or only as a civil polity and a form of civil government, we shall widely mistake the true nature of it. It is evident beyond question, the Mosaical account of it represents it a theocracy, in which Jehovah is God and King; and in which the true worship of the only true God was to be preserved against idolatry, and the nation, in obedience to the laws of this institution, should enjoy liberty, peace, prosperity, and happiness in the protection of a wise and powerful government.

It may be proper to observe here, that these designs appear in themselves worthy the wisdom and the goodness of God; that he should take care in some proper way to put a stop to so prevailing a course of idolatry. If the design should appear in itself manifestly wise and good, the proper means to effect it will appear to be equitable, wise, and good also. Some seem not to perceive, at least are not willing to own this. The more fully then to make us sensible of it, let us briefly observe some of the many great evils of idolatry, which this Hebrew constitution was intended and formed to prevent.

One of the chief and most influencing principles of idolatry, was a false persuasion that the temporal blessings of life, health, length of days, fruitful seasons, victory in wars, and such advantages were to be expected and sought for as the gifts of some inferior and subordinate beings, as guardians of mortal men; or from secret influence of the stars and heavenly bodies, supposed inhabited, and animated by some powerful beings, or gods, whose protection and favour were to be obtained by the use of some magical ceremonies, gestures, and words, or by some senseless or some barbarous rites of worship.

Thus men came not only to lose the true knowledge of the only one God, and of his immediate providence, and that all these blessings could therefore come from him alone, who was best pleased and best worshipped by virtue, goodness, righteousness, and true holiness; but they became necessarily vicious and corrupt in practice, as well as principle. They came to think they were not to expect the blessings of life from the favour of the one true God, a Being himself of infinite purity, righteousness, and goodness, by reverencing and by imitating him; but from the favour of a Jupiter, who with all his fine titles is represented in his history, to have been as intemperate, as lustful, and as wicked as any the worst of men; or from a Mercury, a patron of thieves and robbers; or from a Bacchus, the god of intemperance and drunkenness; or from a Venus, the patroness of all manner of uncleanness and debauchery.

The known principles and the most sacred ceremonies and mysteries in the idolatrous worship of such deities, actually showed what encouragement was given to all manner of vice. They extinguished all religious principles of moral virtue and goodness, and gave additional strength to men's natural inclinations, to intemperance, lust, fraud, violence, and every kind of unrighteousness and debauchery. The Phalli, and the Mylli, known religious rites in the worship of Bacchus, Osiris, and Ceres, were such obscene ceremonies, that modesty forbids to explain them. It may be sufficient to mention the known custom of virgins before marriage, sacrificing their chastity to the honour of Venus, as a lascivious goddess, as the historian expresses it, lest she alone should appear lascivious. A custom, according to the historian, which was especially used in Cyprus, which was in the neighbourhood of Canaan.

Idolatry had introduced another most cruel custom of human sacrifices. This prevailed among the Phenicians, the Tyrians, and the Carthaginians, a Tyrian colony; on which inhuman custom the forementioned historian makes this remark, that they used a bloody and wicked rite of religion, as a remedy. They offered men for sacrifices, and brought young children to the altars, at an age that usually moves the compassion of an enemy; and endeavoured to obtain the favour of the gods by the blood of those, for whose lives prayers were more generally used to be made to the gods.

This cruel custom, how inhuman soever, such were the evil effects of idolatry, soon became almost universal; and spread itself among the Greeks, the Gauls, and the German nations.

Among the Canaanites it was a known custom to offer their children to Moloch, likely the same idol with Adrameleck and Anameleck. Some learned men have indeed been willing to believe, that passing through the fire to Moloch, might mean a sort of purification, rather than actual burning them in the fire; but besides the testimony of historians in general to the practice of other nations, the Scriptures plainly mean consuming them to death by fire. So it is described by the prophet Ezekiel; "And have caused their sons whom they bare unto me, to pass through the fire to devour them." Did they cause them to pass through the fire, only to purify them, and to preserve them alive? No, certainly; but to devour or consume them. The same prophet elsewhere determines this meaning. "Thou hast slain my children and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire." It is charged as an act of idolatry in Ahaz, that he caused his son to pass through the fire, according to the abomination of the Heathen." This is explained in another place, that "he burned his children in the fire after the abomination of the Heathen." And it is expressly said of Adrameleck, and Anameleck, the idols of Sepharvaim, that, "they burned their children in the fire to them."

If we consider the many other abominable immoralities of the Canaanites, by which they defiled themselves, as they are enumerated in the prohibition of them to the Hebrew nation, we may easily perceive, that a nation which had defiled themselves in so many and so great abominations, did well deserve an exemplary punishment from the righteous judge of the earth; that it was wise, as well as just, to show in their punishment, that their idols were not, as they imagined and falsely believed, the givers of long life, peace, and worldly prosperity; but that the one true God was alone the supreme disposer of all the blessings of providence; and that none of the idol gods, in whom they trusted, could save them out of his hand, or deliver them, when God should visit their iniquities.

May we not also perceive a kind design, in giving some remarkable instances of providence, for the punishment of so gross immoralities, the effects of idolatrous principles and practice, and for the encouragement of such acknowledgment and worship of the true God, as was the best preservative against these abominations, by some observable instances of particular protection and favour; to let such worshippers of the true God know, that by keeping themselves from those abominations, the natural and usual effects of idolatry, they were to hope for the continuance of such particular protection and favour in all after-times?

Hence it may appear, the severity with which the Hebrew history acquaints us, the Canaanites were punished, and the title whereby the Hebrews held their land, whom God cast out before them, were no ways inconsistent with the justice, or wisdom, or goodness of God, as some have insinuated. The question is really brought to this one point, whether such abominable immoralities, as followed naturally and universally from their idolatrous principles, and forms of worship, were not highly criminal; so criminal as to deserve a punishment? that it became the justice and wisdom of the Governor of the world to put some stop to them, to prevent them in some measure, by forming and establishing a constitution in which the knowledge and worship of the one true God should be preserved in opposition to idolatry, a perpetual source of innumerable vices and immoralities. Idolatry, you see then, appears in the natural fruits of it, not only an error of the understanding, not at all a matter of harmless speculation, but a fountain of very dangerous immoralities, which led men naturally, and even with the encouragements of religion, into intemperance, uncleanness, murders, and many vices, inconsistent with the prosperity and peace of society, as well as with the happiness of private persons. When God shall punish such iniquities, he punishes men for their wickedness, not for their errors. He punishes men for such wickedness, as deserves to be punished, whatever pretended principles or real dictates of conscience it may proceed from. No man sure, can reasonably account it injustice in a government to punish sodomy, bestiality, or the frequent murder of innocent children, what pretences soever men should make to conscience or religion, in vindication of them. The most unnatural sins were countenanced by the mysteries of idolatrous worship; the use of that obscene ceremony the Phalli, owed its original to the memory of the sin against nature, and to the history of a god hallowing it by his own act. Can any man reasonably call such a restraint of vice persecution, when not to endeavour by all means to restrain it, would argue a great neglect, weakness, and folly, in any administration of government whatsoever?

If then the punishment for so heinous crimes and immoralities will be just and wise in itself, which way can any man find out, to make it unjust or unwise in the supreme Governor of the world? How can it be unjust in him, to appoint such persons as he shall think most fit, to execute such righteous judgment by his commission? The common rights of nations, and any personal claim of the Hebrews, are altogether out of this question; the history plainly shows, they made no personal or national claim at all to the land of Canaan; but that God cast out the people before them, for all their abominations; that it was not their own power, but the hand of God, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and into the promised land. So that the whole is considered as the immediate act of God himself, for the proof of which the history gives a long series of miracles, in Egypt, at the Red Sea, for many years in the wilderness, at the taking of Jericho, and settling the Hebrew nation in the possession of the promised land.

And here let us justly observe, that this very way of punishing the Canaanites for their many great abominations by the Hebrew nation, to whom God gave the possession of their land, has some peculiar marks of wisdom, which may show it fit to be preferred to many other ways; such as pestilential distempers, fire from heaven, or a flood, ways in which God hath punished the wickedness of the world in former times. For this was a very fit means for the cure, as well as the punishment of idolatry, to destroy the root of these great evils, as well as to execute righteous judgment on those who had committed them. This was a design every way worthy the wisdom and goodness of God. Sure then, no ways inconsistent with his justice. The protection of the Hebrew nation, and the favour of God to them as a peculiar people, was a visible and standing confutation of idolatry; it showed that Jehovah, the one true God, the King of Israel, had himself an immediate hand in the administration of particular providence; that he had not given it out of his own hands into the hands of any inferior beings whatsoever, which error was the great foundation of idolatry. It farther showed the power of Jehovah the true God, manifested in the protection of his people, superior to the power of all the idols of the Heathen; and that none of the false gods they worshipped could be compared to Jehovah.

This is a question then not to be argued from the common rights of men, and nations; for no such rights, either of invasion or conquest, are so much as pretended to in the most distant manner. We see the only point in question, is, what are the rights of God's supreme authority? What is consistent with the wisdom of his government, how far he may punish the greatest immoralities with temporal evils? Ask the Sacred History, it will tell you, the Hebrews set up no title to the land of Canaan, either civil or religious, in their own right; it only makes the rights of the Sovereign of the world as extensive as the rights of the chief magistrates in every government are allowed by the laws of nature and nations to be over their own subjects. The Scriptures on this question only assert, that God gave a commission to execute his sentence, which was either a forfeiture of lands, or life, for a long commission of crimes, that deservedly incurred the forfeiture of both.

Whether the Hebrew nation had really such a commission from God, or no; whether they were truly directed by divine oracle; whether such wonders were really wrought before their eyes, and such unquestionable instances of divine favour and protection in a long series for many years, as the Hebrew history relates: these are all questions of fact. But in all such questions general and abstract reasonings can have no place, where the facts themselves are naturally and morally possible, as every one may perceive they are in this case. If the supreme Governor of the world has a right to give such commission, if it is not unjust to use the hands of men, instead of a plague or fire from heaven, to punish the wickedness of men, the only question that can remain in such a case is this, whether in fact the Hebrew nation did really receive such a commission from Jehovah, or no: Thus far then the whole will rest upon the evidence of the Mosaic revelation; and there I shall leave it, it not being the design of this dissertation to enter into an argument, in which many, as I apprehend, have already given so full satisfaction.

Rev. Moses Lowman.

§ 121. *The Excellence of Scripture.*

The incomparable excellency which is in the sacred Scriptures, will fully appear, if we consider the matters contained in them under this threefold capacity. 1. As matters of divine revelation. 2. As a rule of life. 3. As containing that covenant of grace which relates to man's eternal happiness.

I. Consider the Scriptures generally, as containing in it matters of divine revelation, and therein the excellency of the Scripture appears in two things. 1. The matters which are revealed. 2. The manner in which they are revealed.

I. The matters which are revealed in Scripture, may be considered these three ways. 1. As they are matters of the greatest weight and moment. 2. As matters of the greatest depth and mysteriousness. 3. As matters of the most universal satisfaction to the minds of men.

I. They are matters of the greatest moment and importance for men to know. The wisdom of men is most known by the weight of the things they speak; and therefore that wherein the wisdom of God is discovered, cannot contain any thing that is mean and trivial; they must be matters of the highest importance, which the Supreme Ruler of the world vouchsafes to speak to men concerning: and such we shall find the matters which God hath revealed in his word to be, which either concern the rectifying our apprehensions of his nature, or making known to men their state and condition, or discovering the way whereby to avoid eternal misery. Now which is there of these three, which, supposing God to discover his mind to the world, it doth not highly become him to speak to men of?

1. What is there which doth more highly concern men to know, than God himself? or what more glorious and excellent object could he discover than himself to the world? There is nothing certainly which should more commend the Scriptures to us, than that thereby we may grow

more acquainted with God; that we may know more of his nature, and all his perfections, and many of the great reasons of his actings in the world. We may by them understand with safety what the eternal purposes of God were as to the way of man's recovery by the death of his Son; we may there see and understand the great wisdom of God; not only in the contrivance of the world, and ordering of it, but in the gradual revelations of himself to his people, by what steps he trained up his church till the fulness of time was come; what his aim was in laying such a load of ceremonies on his people the Jews; by what steps and degrees he made way for the full revelation of his will to the world by speaking in these last days by his Son, after he had spoken at sundry times and divers manners by the prophets, &c. unto the fathers. In the Scriptures we read the most rich and admirable discoveries of divine goodness, and all the ways and methods he useth in alluring sinners to himself; with what majesty he commands, with what condescension he entreats, with what importunity he woos men's souls to be reconciled to him; with what favour he embraceth, with what tenderness he chastiseth, with what bowels he pitieth those who have chosen him to be their God! With what power he supporteth, with what wisdom he directeth, with what cordials he refresheth the souls of such who are dejected under the sense of his displeasure, and yet their love is sincere towards him! With what profound humility, what holy boldness, what becoming distance, and yet what restless importunity do we therein find the souls of God's people addressing themselves to him in prayer! With what cheerfulness do they serve him, with what confidence do they trust him, with what resolution do they adhere to him in all straits and difficulties, with what patience do they submit to his will in their greatest extremities! How fearful are they of sinning against God, how careful to please him, how regardless of suffering, when they must choose either that or sinning, how little apprehensive of men's displeasure, while they enjoy the favour of God! Now all these things which are so fully and pathetically expressed in Scripture, do abundantly set forth to us the exuberancy and pleonasm of God's grace and goodness towards his people, which makes them delight so much in him, and be so sensible of his displeasure. But above all other discoveries of God's goodness, his sending his Son into the world to die for sinners, is that which the Scripture sets forth with the greatest life and eloquence. By eloquence, I mean not an artificial composure of words, but the gravity, weight, and persuasiveness of the matter contained in them. And what can tend more to melt our frozen hearts into a current of thankful obedience to God, than the vigorous reflection of the beams of God's love through Jesus Christ upon us? Was there ever so great an expression of love heard of! nay, was it possible to be imagined, that that God who perfectly hates sin, should himself offer the pardon of it, and send his Son into the world to secure it to the sinner, who doth so heartily repent of his sins, as to deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Christ! Well might the Apostle say, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." How dry and sapless are all the voluminous discourses of philosophers, compared with this sentence! How jejune and unsatisfactory are all the discoveries they had of God and his goodness, in comparison of what we have by the Gospel of Christ! Well might Paul then say, "That he determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified." Christ crucified is the library which triumphant souls will be studying to all eternity. This is the only library which to commend is the true *ἰατρεῖον ψυχῆς*, that which cures the soul of all its maladies and distempers; other knowledge makes men's minds giddy and flatulent, this settles and composes them; other knowledge is apt to swell men into high conceits and opinions of themselves, this brings them to the truest view of themselves, and thereby to humility and sobriety; other knowledge leaves men's hearts as it found them, this alters them and makes them better. So transcendent an excellency is there in the knowledge of Christ crucified above the sublimest speculations in the world!

And is not this an inestimable benefit we enjoy by the Scripture, that therein we can read and converse with all these expressions of God's love and goodness, and that in his own language? Shall we admire and praise what we meet with in Heathen philosophers, which is generous and handsome; and shall we not adore the infinite fulness of the Scriptures, which run over with continued expressions of that and a higher nature? What folly is it to magnify those lean kine, the notions of philosophers, and to contemn the fat, the plenty and fulness of the Scriptures? If there be not far more valuable and excellent discoveries of the divine nature and perfections, if there be not far more excellent directions and rules of practice in the Sacred Scriptures, than in the sublimest of all the philosophers, then let us leave our full ears, and feed upon the thin. But certainly no sober and rational spirit, that puts any value upon the knowledge of God, but on the same account that he doth prize the discourses of any philosophers concerning God, he cannot but set a value of a far higher nature on the Word of God. And as the goodness of God is thus discovered in scripture, so is his justice and holiness: we have therein recorded the most remarkable judgments of God upon contumacious sinners, the severest denunciations of a judgment to come against all that live in sin, the exactest precepts of holiness in the world; and what can be desired more to discover the holiness of God, than we find in Scripture concerning him? If therefore acquaintance with the nature, perfection, designs of so excellent a being as God is, be a thing desirable to human nature, we have the greatest cause to admire the excellency and adore the fulness of the Scriptures, which gives so large, rational, and complete account of the being and attributes of God. And which tends yet more to commend the Scriptures to us, those things which the Scripture doth most fully discover concerning God, do not at all contradict those prime and common notions which are in our natures concerning him, but do exceedingly advance and improve them, and tend the most to regulate our conceptions and apprehensions of God, that we may not miscarry therein, as otherwise men are apt to do. For it being natural to men so far to love themselves, as to set the greatest value upon those excellencies which they think themselves most masters of: thence men come to be exceedingly mistaken in their apprehensions of a deity, some attributing one thing as a perfection, another a different thing, according to their humours and inclinations. Thus imperious self-willed men are apt to cry up God's absolute power and dominion as his greatest perfection; easy and soft-spirited men his patience and goodness; severe and rigid men his justice and severity: every one according to his humour and temper, making his god of his own complexion: and not only so, but in things remote enough from being perfections at all, yet because they are such things as they prize and value, they suppose of necessity they must be in God, as is evident in the Epicureans' ἀταραξία, by which they exclude providence, as hath already been observed. And withal considering how very difficult it is for one who really believes that God is of a pure, just, and holy nature, and that he hath grievously offended him by his sins, to believe that this God will pardon him upon true repentance: it is thence necessary that God should make known himself to the world, to prevent our misconceptions of his nature, and to assure a suspicious, because guilty creature, how ready he is to pardon iniquity, transgression, and sin, to such as unfeignedly repent of their follies, and return unto himself. Though the light of nature may dictate much to us of the benignity and goodness of the divine nature, yet it is hard to conceive that that should discover farther than God's general goodness to such as please him: but no foundation can be gathered thence of his readiness to pardon offenders, which being an act of grace, must alone be discovered by his will. I cannot think the sun, moon, and stars are such itinerant preachers, as to unfold unto us the whole counsel and will of God in reference to man's acceptance with God upon repentance. It is not every star in the firmament can do that which the star once did to the wise men, lead them unto Christ. The sun in the heavens is no Parelius to the sun of righteousness. The best astronomer will never find the day-star from on high in the rest of his number. What St. Austin said of Tully's works, is true of the whole volume of the creation. There are admirable things to be found in them: but the name of Christ is not legible there. The work of redemption is not engraven on the works of providence; if it had, a particular divine revelation had been unnecessary, and the apostles were sent on a needless errand, which the world had understood without their preaching, viz. "That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to men their trespasses, and hath committed to them the ministry of reconciliation." How was the word of reconciliation committed to them if it were common to them with the whole frame of the world? and the apostle's query elsewhere might have been easily answered, How can men hear without a preacher? for then they might have known the way of salvation, without any special messenger sent to deliver it to them. I grant that God's long suffering and patience is intended to lead men to repentance, and that some general collections might be made from providence of the placability of God's nature, and that God never left himself without a witness of his goodness in the world, being kind to the unthankful, and doing good, in giving rain and fruitful seasons. But though these things might sufficiently discover to such who were apprehensive of the guilt of sin, that God did not act according to his greatest severity, and thereby did give men encouragement to hearken out and inquire after the true way of being reconciled to God; yet all this amounts not to a firm foundation for faith as to the remission of sin, which doth suppose God himself publishing an act of grace and indemnity to the world, wherein he assures the pardon of sin to such as truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. Now is not this an inestimable advantage we enjoy by the Scriptures, that therein we understand what God himself hath discovered of his own nature and perfections, and of his readiness to pardon sin upon those gracious terms of faith and repentance, and that which necessarily follows from these two, hearty and sincere obedience?

2. The Scriptures give the most faithful representation of the state and condition of the soul of man. The world was almost lost in disputes concerning the nature, condition, and immortality of the soul before divine revelation was made known to mankind by the gospel of Christ; but "life and immortality was brought to light by the gospel," and the future state of the soul of man, not discovered in an uncertain Platonical way, but with the greatest light and evidence from that God who hath the supreme disposal of souls, and therefore best knows and understands them. The Scriptures plainly and fully reveal a judgment to come, in which God will judge the secrets of all hearts, when every one must give an account of himself unto God, and God will call men to give an account of their stewardship here, of all the receipts they have had from him, and the expenses they have been at, and the improvements they have made of the talents he put into their hands. So that the gospel of Christ is the fullest instrument of the discovery of the certainty of the future state of the soul, and the conditions which abide it, upon its being dislodged from the body. But this is not all which the Scripture discovers as to the state of the soul; for it is not only a prospective-glass, reaching to its future state, but it is the most faithful looking-glass, to discover all the spots and deformities of the soul: and not only shows where they are, but whence they came, what their nature is, and whither they tend. The true original of all that disorder and discomposure which is in the soul of man, is only fully and satisfactorily given us in the Word of God. The nature and working of this corruption in man, had never been so clearly manifested, had not the law and will of God been discovered to the world; that is the glass whereby we see the secret workings of those bees in our hearts, the corruptions of our natures; that sets forth the folly of our imaginations, the unruliness of our passions, the distempers of our wills, and the abundant deceitfulness of our hearts. And it is hard for the most Elephantine sinner (one of the greatest magnitude) so to trouble these waters, as not therein to discover the greatness of his own deformities. But that which tends most to awaken the drowsy, senseless spirits of men, the Scripture doth most fully describe the tendency of corruption, "that the wages of sin is death," and the issue of continuance in sin will be the everlasting misery of the soul, in a perpetual separation from the presence of God, and undergoing the lashes and severities of conscience to all eternity. What a great discovery is this of the faithfulness of God to the world, that he suffers not men to undo themselves without letting them know of it before hand, that they might avoid it! God seeks not to entrap men's souls, nor doth he rejoice in the misery and ruin of his creatures, but fully declares to them what the consequence and issue of their sinful practices will be, assures them of a judgment to come, declares his own future severity against contumacious sinners, that they might not think themselves surprised, and that if they had known there had been so great danger in sin, they would never have been such fools as for the sake of it to run into eternal misery. Now God to prevent this, with the greatest plainness and faithfulness, hath showed men the nature and danger of all their sins, and asks them before hand what they will do in the end thereof; whether they are able to bear his wrath, and wrestle with everlasting burnings? if not, he bids them be-

think themselves of what they have done already, and repent and amend their lives, lest iniquity prove their ruin, and destruction overtake them, and that without remedy. Now if men have cause to prize and value a faithful monitor, one that tenders their good, and would prevent their ruin, we have cause exceedingly to prize and value the Scriptures, which give us the truest representation of the state and condition of our souls.

3. The Scripture discovers to us the only way of pleasing God and enjoying his favour. That clearly reveals the way (which man might have sought for to all eternity without particular revelation) whereby sins may be pardoned, and whatever we do may be acceptable unto God. It shows us that the ground of our acceptance with God, is through Christ, whom he hath made "a propitiation for the sins of the world," and who alone is the true and living way, whereby we may "draw near to God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." Through Christ we understand the terms on which God will show favour and grace to the world, and by him we have ground of a *παρρησια* access with freedom and boldness unto God. On his account we may hope not only for grace to subdue our sins, resist temptations, conquer the devil and the world; but having "fought this good fight, and finished our course by patient continuance in well doing, we may justly look for glory, honour, and immortality," and that "crown of righteousness which is laid up for those who wait in faith," holiness, and humility, for the appearance of Christ from heaven. Now what things can there be of greater moment and importance for men to know, or God to reveal, than the nature of God and ourselves, the state and condition of our souls, the only way to avoid eternal misery and enjoy everlasting bliss!

The Scriptures discover not only matters of importance, but of the greatest depth and mysteriousness. There are many wonderful things in the law of God, things we may admire, but are never able to comprehend. Such are the eternal purposes and decrees of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the manner of the operation of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men, which are all things of great weight and moment for us to understand and believe that they are, and yet may be unsearchable to our reason, as to the particular manner of them.

The Scripture comprehends matters of the most universal satisfaction to the minds of men; though many things do much exceed our apprehensions, yet others are most suitable to the dictates of our nature, as Origen bid Celsus see, whether it was not the agreeableness of the principles of faith with the common notions of human nature, which prevailed most upon all candid and ingenuous auditors of them. And therefore, as Socrates said of Heraclitus's books, what he understood was excellent, and therefore he supposed that which he did not understand was so too: so ought we to say of the Scriptures: if those things which are within our capacity be so suitable to our natures and reasons, those cannot contradict our reason which yet are above them. There are many things which the minds of men were sufficiently assured that they were, yet were to seek for satisfaction concerning them, which they could never have had without divine revelation. As the nature of true happiness, wherein it lay, and how to be obtained, which the philosophers were so puzzled with, the Scriptures give us full satisfaction concerning it. True contentment under the troubles of life, which the Scripture only acquaints us with the true grounds of; and all the prescriptions of Heathen moralists fall as much short of, as the directions of an empiric do of a wise and skilful physician. Avoiding the fears of death, which can alone be through a grounded expectation of a future state of happiness which death leads men to, which cannot be had but through the right understanding of the Word of God. Thus we see the excellency of the matters themselves contained in this revelation of the mind of God to the world.

As the matters themselves are of an excellent nature, so is the manner wherein they are revealed in the Scriptures; and that,

1. In a clear and perspicuous manner; not but there may be still some passages which are hard to be understood, as being either prophetical, or consisting of ambiguous phrases, or containing matters above our comprehension; but all those things which concern the terms of man's salvation, are delivered with the greatest evidence and perspicuity. Who cannot understand what these things mean, "what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—that "without faith it is impossible to please God?"—that "without holiness none shall see the Lord"—that "unless we be born again we can never enter into the kingdom of heaven:" these and such like things are so plain and clear, that it is nothing but men's shutting their eyes against the light can keep them from understanding them; God intended these things as directions to men; and is he not able to speak intelligibly when he pleases? He that made the tongue, shall he not speak so as to be understood without an infallible interpreter? especially when it is his design to make known to men the terms of their eternal happiness? Will God judge men at the great day for not believing those things which they could not understand? Strange, that ever man should judge the Scriptures obscure in matters necessary, when the Scripture accounts it so great a judgment for men not to understand them. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." Sure Lot's door was visible enough, if it were a judgment for the men of Sodom not to see it; and the Scriptures then are plain and intelligible enough, if it be so great a judgment not to understand them.

2. In a powerful and authoritative manner; as the things contained in Scripture do not so much beg acceptance as command it; in that the expressions wherein our duty is concerned, are such as awe men's consciences and pierce to their hearts and to their secret thoughts; all things are open and naked before this Word of God; every secret of the mind and thought of the heart lies open to its stroke and force; "it is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The word is a telescope to discover the great luminaries of the world, the truths of highest concernment to the souls of men, and it is such a microscope as discovers to us the smallest atom of our thoughts, and discerns the most secret intents of the heart. And as far as this light reacheth, it comes with power and authority, as it comes armed with the majesty of that God who reveals it, whose authority extends over the soul and conscience of man in its most secret and hidden recesses.

3. In a pure and unmixed manner;

in all other writings, how good soever, we have a great mixture of dross and gold together: here is nothing but pure gold, diamonds without flaws, suns without spots. The most current coins of the world have their alloys of baser metals, there is no such mixture in divine truths; as they all come from the same author, so they all have the same purity. There is a Urim and Thummim upon the whole Scripture, light and perfection in every part of it. In the Philosophers we may meet, it may be, with some scattered fragments of purer metal, amidst abundance of dross and impure ore; here we have whole wedges of gold, the same vein of purity and holiness running through the whole book of Scriptures. Hence it is called "the form of sound words;" here have been no hucksters to corrupt and mix their own inventions with divine truths.

4. In an uniform and agreeable manner. This I grant is not sufficient of itself to prove the Scriptures to be divine, because all men do not contradict themselves in their writings, but yet here are some peculiar circumstances to be considered in the agreeableness of the parts of Scripture to each other, which are not to be found in mere human writings.

1. That this doctrine was delivered by persons who lived in different ages and times from each other. Usually one age corrects another's faults, and we are apt to pity the ignorance of our predecessors, when it may be our posterity may think us as ignorant, as we do them. But in the Sacred Scripture we read not one age condemning another; we find light still increasing in the series of times in Scripture, but no reflections in any time upon the ignorance, or weakness of the precedent; the dimmest light was sufficient for its age, and was a step to farther discovery. Quintilian gives it as the reason of the great uncertainty of Grammar rules, "quia non analogia dimissa cœlo formam loquendi dedit;" that which he wanted as to Grammar, we have as to divine truth; they are delivered from heaven, and therefore are always uniform and agreeable to each other.

2. By persons of different interests in the world. God made choice of men of all ranks to be inditers of his oracles, to make it appear it was no matter of state policy, or particular interest, which was contained in his word, which persons, of such different interest, could not have agreed in as they do. We have Moses, David, Solomon, persons of royal rank and quality; and can it be any mean thing, which these think it their glory to be penners of? We have Isaiah, Daniel, and other persons of the highest education and accomplishments, and can it be any trivial thing which these employ themselves in? We have Amos, and other prophets in the Old Testament, and the apostles in the New, of the meaner sort of men in the world, yet all these join in concert together; when God tunes their spirits, all agree in the same strain of divine truths, and give light and harmony to each other.

3. By persons in different places and conditions; some in prosperity in their own country, some under banishment and adversity, yet all agreeing in the same substance of doctrine; of which no alteration we see was made, either for the flattery of those in power, or for avoiding miseries and calamities. And under all the different dispensations before, under, and after the law, though the management of things was different, yet the doctrine and design was for substance the same in all. All the different dispensations agree in the same common principles of religion; the same ground of acceptance with

God, and obligation to duty was common to all, though the peculiar instances wherein God was served might be different according to the ages of growth in the church of God. So that this great uniformity considered in these circumstances, is an argument that these things came originally from the same Spirit, though conveyed through different instruments to the knowledge of the world.

5. In a persuasive and convincing manner: and that these ways, 1. Bringing divine truth down to our capacity, clothing spiritual matter in familiar expressions and similitudes, that so they might have the easier admission into our minds. 2. Propounding things as our interest, which are our duty; thence God so frequently in Scripture, recommends our duties to us under all those motives which are wont to have the greatest force on the minds of men; and annexeth gracious promises to our performance of them; and those of the most weighty and concerning things. Of grace, favour, protection, deliverance, audience of prayers, and eternal happiness, and if these will not prevail with men, what motives will? 3. Courting us to obedience, when he might not only command us to obey but punish presently for disobedience. Hence are all those most pathetical and affectionate strains we read in Scripture: "O that there were such a heart within them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might go well with them, and with their children after them!—Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?—Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel? How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?—Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.—O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?" What majesty and yet what sweetness and condescension is there in these expressions! What obstinacy and rebellion is it in men for them to stand out against God, when he thus comes down from his throne of majesty and woos rebellious sinners to return unto him that they may be pardoned! Such a matchless and unparalleled strain of rhetoric is there in the Scripture, far above art and insinuations of the most admired orators. Thus we see the peculiar excellency of the manner wherein the matters contained in Scripture are revealed to us: thus we have considered the excellency of the Scripture, as it is a discovery of God's mind to the world.

The Scriptures may be considered as a rule of life, or as a law of God, which is given for the government of the lives of men, and therein the excellency of it lies in the nature of the duties, and the encouragements to the practice of them.

I. In the nature of the duties required, which are most becoming God to require, most reasonable for us to perform.

1. Most becoming God to require, as they are most suitable and agreeable to the divine nature, the imitation of which in our actions is the substance of our religion. Imitation of him in his goodness and holiness, by our constant endeavours of mortifying sin and growing in grace and piety. In his grace and mercy, by our kindness to all men, forgiving the injuries men do unto us, doing good unto our greatest enemies. In his justice and equity, by doing as we would be done by, and keeping a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men. The first takes in the duties of the first, the other the duties of the second table.

All acts of piety towards God, are a part of justice; for as Tully saith, "Quid, aliud est pietas nisi justitia, adversus deos?" And so our loving God with our whole hearts, our entire and sincere obedience to his will, is a part of natural justice; for thereby we do but render unto God that which is his due from us as we are his creatures. We see then the whole duty of man, the fearing God and keeping his commandments, is as necessary a part of justice, as the rendering to every man his own is.

2. They are most reasonable for us to perform, in that 1. Religion is not only a service of the reasonable faculties which are employed the most in it, the commands of the Scripture reaching the heart most, and the service required being a spiritual service, not lying in meats and drinks, or any outward observations, but in a sanctified temper of heart and mind, which discovers itself in the course of a Christian's life: but 2. The service itself of religion is reasonable; the commands of the gospel are such, as no man's reason which considers them, can doubt of the excellency of them. All natural worship is founded from the dictates of nature, all instituted worship on God's revealed will; and it is one of the prime dictates of nature, that God must be universally obeyed. Besides, God requires nothing but what is apparently man's interest to do; God prohibits nothing but what will destroy him if he doth it; so that the commands of the Scriptures are very just and reasonable.

2. The encouragements are more than proportionable to the difficulty of obedience. God's commands are in themselves easy, and most suitable to our natures. What more rational for a creature than to obey his Maker? All the difficulty of religion ariseth from the corruption of nature. Now God, to encourage men to conquer the difficulties arising thence, hath propounded the strongest motives, and most prevailing arguments to obedience. Such are the considerations of God's love and goodness manifested to the world by sending his Son into it to die for sinners, and to give them an example which they are to follow, and by his readiness through him to pardon the sins, and accept the persons of such who so received him as to walk in him; and by his promises of grace to assist them in the wrestling with the enemies of their salvation. And to all these add that glorious and inconceivable reward which God hath promised to all those who sincerely obey him, and by these things we see how much the encouragements overweigh the difficulties, and that none can make the least pretence that there is no motive sufficient to down-weigh the troubles which attend the exercise of obedience to the will of God. So that we see what a peculiar excellency there is in the Scriptures as a rule of life, above all the precepts of mere moralists, the foundation of obedience being laid deeper in man's obligation to serve his Maker, the practice of obedience being carried higher in those most holy precepts which are in Scripture, the reward of obedience being incomparably greater than what men are able to conceive, much less to promise or bestow.

The excellency of the Scriptures appears as they contain in them a covenant of grace, or the transactions between God and man in order to his eternal happiness. The more memorable any transactions are, the more valuable are any authentic records of them. The Scriptures contain in them the Magna Charta of heaven, an act of pardon with the royal assent of heaven, a proclamation of good-will from God towards men; and can we then set too great a value on that which contains all the remarkable passages between God and the souls of men, in order to their felicity, from the beginning of the world? Can we think, since there is a God in the world of infinite goodness, that he should suffer all mankind to perish inevitably without his propounding any means for escaping of eternal misery? Is God so good to men as to this present life; and can we think, if man's soul be immortal, that he should wholly neglect any offer of good to men as to their eternal welfare? Or is it possible to imagine that man should be happy in another world without God's promising it, and prescribing conditions in order to it? If so, then this happiness is no free gift of God, unless he hath the bestowing and promising of it; and man is no rational agent, unless a reward suppose conditions to be performed in order to the obtaining it; or man may be bound to conditions which were never required of him; or if they must be required, then there must be a revelation of God's will, whereby he doth require them: and if so, then there are some records extant of the transactions between God and man, in order to his eternal happiness: for what reason can we have to imagine that such records, if once extant, should not continue still, especially since the same goodness of God is engaged to preserve such records, which at first did cause them to be indited? Supposing then such records extant some where in the world, of these grand transactions between God and men's souls, our business is brought to a period: for what other records are there in the world that can in the least vie with the Scriptures, as to the giving so just an account of all the transactions between God and men from the foundation of the world? which gives us all the steps, methods, and ways whereby God hath made known his mind and will to the world, in order to man's eternal salvation? It remains only then that we adore and magnify the goodness of God in making known his will to us, and that we set a value and esteem on the Scriptures, as the only authentic instruments of that Grand Charter of peace, which God hath revealed in order to man's eternal happiness.

Stillingfleet.

§ 122. *The prevalence of Christianity, an argument of its divinity.*

The establishment of the Christian religion among men is the greatest of all miracles. In spite of all the power of Rome; in spite of all the passions, interests, and prejudices of so many nations; so many philosophers; so many different religions; twelve poor fishermen, without art, without eloquence, without power, publish and spread their doctrine throughout the world. In spite of a persecution for three centuries, which seemed every moment ready to extinguish it; in spite of continued and innumerable martyrdoms of persons of all conditions, sexes, and countries; the truth in the end triumphs over error, pursuant to the predictions both of the old and new law. Let any one show some other religion, which has the same mark of a divine protection.

A powerful conqueror may establish, by his arms, the belief of a religion, which flatters the sensuality of men; a wise legislator may gain himself attention and respect by the usefulness of his laws; a sect in credit, and supported by the civil power, may abuse the credulity of the people; all this is possible: but what could victorious, learned, and superstitious nations see, to induce them so readily to Jesus Christ, who promised them nothing in this world but persecutions and sufferings; who proposed to them the practice of a morality, to which all darling passions must be sacrificed. Is not the conversion of the world to such a religion, without miracles, a greater and more credible one, than even the greatest of those which some refuse to believe? *Fenelon.*

§ 123. *A summary of arguments for the truth of the Gospel.*

He that well considers the force of those arguments which are brought to establish the truth of the Christian religion; that sees how they all (though drawn from different topics) conspire in the most perfect manner to convince the world of the divine original of this faith; would scarce think it possible, that the reason and understanding of mankind should ever oppose it; will therefore conclude there is something more than pure infidelity at the bottom, and that they are not mere scruples of the mind which create so long and violent contention.

If he thinks on the excellency of the precepts of the Christian religion, he finds them of the fittest nature possible to persuade him to receive it as the contrivance of heaven. They are all so worthy of God, so beneficial and improving to human nature, and so conducive to the welfare and happiness of society.

When he considers the strange and speedy propagation of this faith through the world, with its triumph over the wit and policy, the force and malice of its formidable enemies; and all this accomplished by such methods, as the reason of mankind would have pronounced the most foolish and absurd: he sees here the overruling hand of God, which alone could give it such astonishing successes, by those very ways and means from which its utter confusion was to be expected.

The exact accomplishment of express and unquestionable prophecies, concerning the most remarkable events of the world, is a solemn appeal to all reasonable nature, whether that revelation be not truly divine, which contains such plain and wonderful predictions.

Lastly, The miracles wrought by Jesus Christ and his apostles, in confirmation of this faith and doctrine, are such proofs of the near concern which heaven had therein; that he who considers them, and at the same time calls Christianity an imposture, must either take pains to avoid knowing the finger of God, when he sees it, or else do infinitely worse, by ascribing the manifest effects thereof to mean artifice, or diabolical power.

From these topics the truth of Christianity has been so substantially argued, and so clearly proved; that, by all the rules of right reason in use amongst mankind, it is rendered plainly absurd and irrational to reject it. One need not wish to see an adversary reduced to worse extremities, than one of those arguments well managed and pressed home would reduce him to; provided he were kept from excursions, and obliged to return no answers but what were directly to the purpose.

Humphrey Detton.

§ 124. *The facts related in the Evangelists may be depended on.*

That there was such a person as Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee, in the time of Tiberius Cæsar, the Roman emperor; that he had a company of poor men for his disciples; that he and his disciples went about the country of Judea, teaching and preaching; that he was put to death upon the cross, after the Roman manner, under Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea; that after his death, his disciples went about into all, or most parts of the then known world, teaching, and preaching, that this Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and that he was risen from the dead, and gone into heaven; that in a few years they converted a very great number of people, in all places, to this belief; that the professors of this belief were called Christians; that they were most cruelly persecuted, and many thousands of them put to death, and that with the most exquisite torments, for no other reason, but because they were Christians; that these persecutions were several times renewed against them, for the space of about three hundred years; and yet, for all this, that the number of Christians daily increased, and that not only idiots and unlearned men, but great scholars and philosophers were converted to Christianity, even in the times of persecution; all this, being merely matter of fact, was never yet denied by the greatest enemies of the Christian religion. And, indeed, these things are so abundantly testified by the histories and other writings of those times; and have been so generally received for truth, as well by the opposers as believers of Christianity, by a constant, universal, and uninterrupted tradition, from those days, even unto this time; that a man may as well deny the truth of any, or of all, the histories of the world, as of this. *Archbishop Synge.*

§ 125. *Superiority of the Gospel to all other writings, an argument of its truth.*

To what was it owing, that the Jewish writers should have such lovely and great ideas of God, and such just notions of the worship due to him, far above any thing which we meet with in the writings of the greatest lights of the Heathen world; every one of which either patronised idolatry, or fell into errors of worse consequence? Can it be accounted for by the force of natural or human assistances? No, the eminent philosophers of Athens and Rome equalled them, it is certain, in natural abilities, and exceeded them confessedly in the superstructures of acquired knowledge, and all the advantages of a refined education. It must be therefore owing to some supernatural or divine helps; and none, but he, in whom are contained all the treasures of wisdom, could have enriched their minds to such a degree, and furnished such a vast expanse of thought. If Judea was ennobled by these exalted notions, of which other nations, who were sunk into the dregs of Polytheism and idolatry, were destitute; if the kindly dew of heaven descended on this fleece only, while all the earth around betrayed a want of refreshing moisture; this was the Lord's doing, and ought to be marvellous in our eyes.

Had God revealed himself to the Greeks, or some other nation famed for their curious researches into every branch of literature, and for the depths of wisdom and policy; those truths, which were so many emanations from the great fountain of light, would have been looked upon as the result of their penetration, and their own discoveries: but by communicating his will to a people of no inventive and enterprising genius, of no enlarged reach and compass of thought; such suspicions are avoided, and the proofs of a revelation more conspicuous and illustrious. And this may be one reason among others, why, at a time when the rest of the world were bigoted to superstition, idolatry, and a false religion, God singled out this nation, in that point not so corrupt as others, to be the guardian and depositary of the true.

If nothing recommended the Scripture but this single consideration, that all those collected beams of spiritual light centre in it alone, which were widely diffused amidst a variety of treatises, and lost amidst a crowd of palpable absurdities; even this would be no improbable argument of its divinity; but this is not all: let us, in order to compile an adequate, unerring standard of religious truths, take in all the assistances we can get from all the philosophers in Greece, from Tully at Rome, nay even from Confucius as far as China; and yet, after all, the scheme will be defective in what the Scriptures have recommended, a pure, rational worship of God only, in spirit and in truth, a fulness of pardon for every sin upon repentance, and the nobleness of the rewards hereafter. The love of God will not be required in so high a degree, as it is in the Scriptures; nor enforced by so strong a motive as our Saviour's dying for mankind has done; nor our charity and love to the distressed recommended by so powerful an incentive, as that our Redeemer has made them his representatives, and will place to his own account, whatever was done for his sake to them.

One may challenge any man to produce, before Christianity, among the Heathen world, such a complete system of morality, reaching all the duties of life, without any defect; and full without overflowing, or any redundancy, as the Scriptures contain.—And it is needless to tell any man of plain sense, that there must be always a proportion between the cause and the effect. Now, if we exclude the divine power, what proportion can we find between the causes of Christianity, and Christianity itself? Christianity is a religion which has disabused the world, and rescued it from those many vicious practices, such as the exposing of infants, polygamy, &c. which were universally defended among the Pagans, and from human sacrifices, and from innumerable abominable and brutal rites; a religion so perfective of human nature, and so expressive of the divine; that we want ideas to carry us to a conception of any thing beyond it. And who were the authors or causes of this religion? Why, a set of men bred up in low life to mean employments, which cramp the native powers of the mind. And can we seriously think, that a set of unlettered, unenterprising men, could open several rich mines of truth, which had escaped the laborious researches of the profoundest scholars, and the happy sagacity of the most penetrating wits?

Since therefore every effect must have a competent and proportionable cause; and since the supposed natural causes and authors of Christianity, considered as mere men, exclusive of divine inspiration, were plainly unequal to the task, nor could ever have brought to light such doctrines, as exceeded whatever the philosophers before had done; though, laying aside their dregs, we should draw off the very flower and spirit of their writings: it is evident, we must have recourse to some supernatural and adequate cause which interested itself in this affair. And to whom, but to the Father of Light, in whom there is no darkness at all, can we be indebted, that now, persons of the slenderest capacities may view those elevated and beneficial truths in the strongest point of light, which the finest spirits of the Gentile world could not before fully ascertain; that our meanest mechanics, with a moderate share of application, may have juster and fuller notions of God's attributes, of eternal happiness, of every duty respecting their Maker, mankind, and themselves, than the most distinguished scholars among the Heathens could attain to, after a life laid out in painful researches?

Seed.

§ 126. *Various reasonings in favour of Christianity.*

God only knows, and God only can tell, whether he will forgive, and upon what terms he will forgive the offences done against him; what mode of worship he requires; what helps he will afford us; and what condition he will place us in hereafter. All this God actually has told us in the gospel. It was to tell us this, he sent his Son into the world, whose mission was confirmed by the highest authority, by signs from heaven, and miracles on earth; whose life and doctrine are delivered down to us by the most unexceptionable witnesses, who sealed their testimony with their blood; who were too curious and incredulous to be themselves imposed upon, too honest and sincere, too plain and artless, to impose upon others.

What then can be the reason that men still refuse to see, and persist in "loving darkness rather than light?" They will tell you perhaps that it is because the gospel is full of incredible mysteries; but our Saviour tells you, and he tells you much truer, that it is "because their deeds are evil." The mysteries and difficulties of the gospel can be no real objection to any man that considers what mysteries occur, and what insuperable objections may be started, in almost every branch of human knowledge; and how often we are obliged, in our most important concerns, to decide and to act upon evidence, encumbered with far greater difficulties than any that are to be found in Scripture. If we can admit no religion that is not free from mystery, we must, I doubt, be content without any religion. Even the religion of nature itself, the whole constitution both of the natural and the moral world, is full of mystery; and the greatest mystery of all would be, if, with so many irresistible marks of truth, Christianity should at last prove false. It is not then because the gospel has too little light for these men that they reject it, but because it has too much. For "every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." The light of the gospel is too prying and inquisitive for such a one. It reveals certain things which he could wish to conceal from all the world, and if possible, from himself. Nor is this all; it not only reveals, but it reproves them. It strikes him with an evidence he cannot bear; an evidence not only of its own truth, but of his unworthy conduct. The gospel does indeed offend him; but it is not his understanding, it is his conscience, that is shocked; he could easily credit what it requires him to believe; but he cannot, or rather he will not, practise what it commands him to do.

It is plain that such a man cannot possibly admit a revelation that condemns him; and it is as plain that the man of virtue cannot spurn the hand that is graciously stretched out to reward him. If he is a truly virtuous man, that is, one who sincerely labours to know his duty, and sincerely intends to perform it, he cannot but wish for more light to guide him in the investigation, more assistance to support him in the discharge of it, more happiness to crown his perseverance in it, than bare reason alone can afford him. This is what all the best and wisest Heathens most ardently desired, what nature has been continually looking out for with the utmost earnestness of expectation. When with a mind thus disposed he sits down to examine the gospel, suggest to me the least shadow of a reason why he should reject it? He finds in it a religion, pure, holy, and benevolent, as the God that gave it. He finds not only its moral precepts but even its sublimest mysteries, calculated to promote internal sanctity, vital piety, universal philanthropy. He finds it throughout so great and noble, so congenial to the finest feelings, and most generous sentiments of his soul; that he cannot but wish it may be true, and never yet, I believe, did any good man wish it to be true, but he actually found it so. He sees in it every expectation of nature answered, every infirmity supported, every want supplied, every terror dissipated, every hope confirmed; nay, he sees that God "has done exceeding abundantly above all that he could either ask or think;" that he has given him, what reason could hardly have the idea of, eternal happiness in a life to come.

It is not a matter of indifference whether you embrace Christianity or not. Though reason could answer all the purposes of revelation, which is far, very far from being the case, yet you are not at liberty to make it your sole guide, if there be such a thing as a true revelation. We are the subjects of the Almighty; and whether we will acknowledge it or not, we live, and cannot but live, under his government. His will is the law of his kingdom. If he has made no express declaration of his will, we must collect it as well as we can from what we know of his nature and our own. But if he has expressly declared his will, that is the law we are to be governed by. We may indeed refuse to be governed by it; but it is at our peril if we do; for if it proves to be a true declaration of his will, to reject it is rebellion.

But to reject or receive it, you may allege, is not a thing in your own power. Belief depends not on your will, but your understanding. And will the righteous judge of the earth condemn you for want of understanding? No; but he may and will condemn you for the wrong conduct of your understanding. It is not indeed in your power to believe whatever you please, whether credible or incredible; but it is in your power to consider thoroughly, whether a supposed incredibility be real or only apparent. It is in your power to bestow a greater or less degree of attention on the evidence before you. It is in your power to examine it with an earnest desire to find out the truth, and a firm resolution to embrace it wherever you do find it; or on the contrary, to bring with you a heart full of incorrigible depravity, or invincible prepossessions. Have you then truly and honestly done every thing that is confessedly in your power, towards forming a right judgment of revelation? Have you ever laid before yourself in one view the whole collective evidence of Christianity? The consistence, harmony, and connexion, of all its various parts; the long chain of prophecies undeniably completed in it; the astonishing and well-attested miracles that attended it; the perfect sanctity of its author; the purity of its precepts; the sublimity of its doctrines; the amazing rapidity of its progress; the illustrious company of confessors, saints and martyrs, who died to confirm its truth; together with an infinite number of collateral proofs and subordinate circumstances, all concurring to form such a body of evidence, as no other truth in the world can show; such as must necessarily bear down, by its own weight and magnitude, all trivial objections to particular parts? Surely these things are not trifles; surely they at least demand seriousness and attention. Have you then done the gospel this common piece of justice? Have you ever sat down to consider it with impartiality and candour; without any favourite vice or early prejudice, without any fondness for applause, or novelty, or refinement, to mislead you? Have you examined it with the same care and diligence, that you would examine a title to an estate? Have you inquired for proper books? Have you read the defences of revelation as well as the attacks upon it? Have you in difficult points applied for the opinion of wise and learned friends; just as you would consult the ablest lawyers when your property was concerned, or the most skilful physicians when your life was at stake? If you can truly say that you have done all these things; if you have faithfully bestowed on these inquiries all the leisure and abilities you are master of, and called in every help within your reach, there is little danger of any material doubts remaining upon your mind.——St. John's affection for his departed friend did not terminate with his life. It was continued after his crucifixion, to his memory, his character, and his religion. After a long life spent in teaching and suffering for that religion, he concluded it with a work of infinite utility, the revisal of the three gospels already written, and the addition of his own to supply what they had omitted. With this view principally he gives us several of our Saviour's discourses with his disciples, which are no where else to be met with; and it is very observable, that these, as well as the many other occurrences of his life, which he introduces as supplemental to the other evangelists, are such as set his beloved master in the most amiable and graceful point of view, such as a favourite disciple would be most likely to select, and most disposed to enlarge upon. Of this kind, for instance, are our Saviour's discourse with the woman of Samaria; the cure of the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda; the acquittal of the woman taken in adultery; the description of the good shepherd and his sheep; the affecting history of Lazarus; the condescending and expressive act of washing his disciples' feet; his inimitably tender and consolatory discourse to them just before his suffering; his most admirable prayer on the same occasion; and his pathetic recommendation of his sheep to St. Peter after his resurrection. These passages are to be found only in St. John's gospel, and whoever reads them with attention will discover in them plain indications not only of a heaven-directed hand, but of a feeling and a grateful heart, smitten with the love of a departed friend, penetrated with a sense of his distinguished kindness, perfectly well informed and thoroughly interested, in every tender scene that it describes, soothing itself with the recollection of little domestic incidents and familiar conversations, and tracing out not only the larger and more obvious features of the favourite character, but even those finer and more delicate strokes in it, which would have eluded a less observing eye, or less faithful memory, than those of a beloved companion and friend.——

Our divine lawgiver showed his wisdom equally in what he enjoined, and what he left unnoticed. He knew exactly, what no Pagan philosopher ever knew, where to be silent and where to speak.——

That which principally attracts our notice in St. John's writings, and in his conduct, is, a simplicity and singleness of heart, a fervent piety, an unbounded benevolence, an unaffected modesty, humility, meekness, and gentleness of disposition. These are evidently the great characteristic virtues that took the lead in his soul, and break forth in every page of his gospel and his epistles.——To know what friendship really is, we must look for it in that sacred repository of every thing great and excellent, the gospel of Christ.——

Our Saviour has assured us that he will consider every real Christian as united to him by closer ties than even those of friendship. This assurance is given us in one of those noble strains of eloquence which are so common in the Sacred Writings. Our Lord being told that his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him, he gives a turn to this little incident, perfectly new, and inexpressibly tender and affectionate. "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hands towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Bishop Porteus.

§ 127. *Difficulties in the Word of God to be expected, with the duty of examining its evidence.*

Origen has observed, with singular sagacity, that he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from him who is the Author of nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it, as are found in the constitution of nature. And in a like way of reflection it may be added, that he who denies the Scripture to have been from God, upon account of these difficulties, may, for the very same reason, deny the world to have been from him.——

Christianity being supposed either true or credible, it is unspeakable irreverence, and really the most presumptuous rashness, to treat it as a light matter. It can never justly be esteemed of little consequence, till it be positively supposed false. Nor do I know a higher and more important obligation which we are under, than that of examining most seriously into the evidence of it, supposing its credibility; and of embracing it upon supposition of its truth. *Butler.*

§ 128. *The information the Gospel gives most desirable.*

The Christian revelation has such pretences, at least, as may make it worthy of a particular consideration: it pretends to come from heaven; to have been delivered by the Son of God; to have been confirmed by undeniable miracles and prophecies; to have been ratified by the blood of Christ and his apostles, who died in asserting its truth: it can show likewise an innumerable company of martyrs and confessors: its doctrines are pure and holy, its precepts just and righteous; its worship is a reasonable service, refined from the errors of idolatry and superstition, and spiritual, like the God who is the object of it; it offers the aid and assistance of heaven to the weakness of nature; which makes the religion of the gospel to be as practicable, as it is reasonable; it promises infinite rewards to obedience, and threatens eternal punishment to obstinate offenders; which makes it of the utmost consequence to us soberly to consider it, since every one who rejects it stakes his own soul against the truth of it.———

Look into the Gospel; there you will find every reasonable hope of nature, nay, every reasonable suspicion of nature, cleared up, and confirmed, every difficulty answered and removed. Do the present circumstances of the world lead you to suspect that God could never be the author of such corrupt and wretched creatures as men now are? Your suspicions are just and well founded. "God made man upright;" but through the temptation of the devil sin entered, and death and destruction followed after.

Do you suspect, from the success of virtue and vice in this world, that the providence of God does not interpose to protect the righteous from violence, or to punish the wicked? The suspicion is not without ground. God leaves his best servants here to be tried oftentimes with affliction and sorrow, and permits the wicked to flourish and abound. The call of the gospel is not to honour and riches here, but to take up our cross and follow Christ.

Do you judge, from comparing the present state of the world with the natural notion you have of God, and of his justice and goodness, that there must needs be another state in which justice shall take place? You reason right; and the gospel confirms the judgment. God has appointed a day to judge the world in righteousness; then those who mourn shall rejoice, those who weep shall laugh, and the persecuted and afflicted servants of God shall be heirs of his kingdom.

Have you sometimes misgivings of mind? Are you tempted to mistrust this judgment, when you see the difficulties which surround it on every side; some which affect the soul in its separate state, some which affect the body in its state of corruption and dissolution? Look to the gospel: there these difficulties are accounted for; and you need no longer puzzle yourself with dark questions concerning the state, condition, and nature of separate spirits, or concerning the body, however to appearance lost and destroyed; for the body and soul shall once more meet to part no more, but to be happy for ever. In this case the learned cannot doubt, and the ignorant may be sure, that it is the man, the very man himself, who shall rise again: for an union of the same soul and body is as certainly the restoration of the man, as the dividing them was the destruction.

Would you know who it is that gives this assurance? It is one who is able to make good his word: one who loved you so well as to die for you; yet one too great to be held a prisoner in the grave. No; he rose with triumph and glory, the first-born from the dead, and will in like manner call from the dust of the earth all those who put their trust and confidence in him.

But who is this, you will say, who was subject to death, and yet had power over death? How could so much weakness and so much strength meet together? That God has the power of life, we know; but then he cannot die: that man is mortal, we know; but then he cannot give life. Consider; does this difficulty deserve an answer, or does it not? Our blessed Saviour lived among us in a low and poor condition, exposed to much ill treatment from his jealous countrymen: when he fell into their power, their rage knew no bounds: they reviled him, insulted him, mocked him, scourged him, and at last nailed him to a cross, where by a shameful and wretched death, he finished a life of sorrow and affliction. Did we know no more of him than this, upon what ground could we pretend to hope that he will be able to save us from the power of death? We might say with the disciples, "We trusted this had been he who should have saved Israel;" but he is dead, he is gone, and all our hopes are buried in his grave.

If you think this ought to be answered, and that the faith of a Christian cannot be a reasonable faith, unless it be able to account for this seeming contradiction; I beseech you then never more complain of the gospel for furnishing an answer to this great objection, for removing this stumbling-block out of the way of our faith. He was a man, and therefore he died. He was the Son of God, and therefore he rose from the dead, and will give life to all his true disciples. He it was who formed this world and all things in it, and for the sake of man was content to become man, and to taste death for all, that all through him may live. This is a wonderful piece of knowledge which God has revealed to us in his gospel; but he has not revealed it to raise our wonder, but to confirm and establish our faith in him to whom he hath committed all power, "whom he hath appointed heir of all things."

Had the gospel required of us to expect from Christ the redemption of our souls and bodies, and given us no reason to think that Christ was endowed with power equal to the work, we might justly have complained; and it would have been a standing reproach, that Christians believe they know not what. But to expect redemption from the Son of God, the resurrection of our bodies from the same hand which at first created and formed them, are rational and well founded acts of faith; and it is the Christian's glory, that he knows in whom he has believed.

That the world was made by the Son of God, is a proposition with which reason has no fault to find: that he who made the world should have power to renew it to life again, is highly consonant to reason. All the mystery lies in this, that so high and great a person should condescend to become man, and subject to death, for the sake of mankind. But are we fit persons to complain of this transcendent mysterious love? or, does it become us to quarrel with the kindness of our blessed Lord towards us, only because it is greater than we can conceive? No; it becomes us to bless and to adore this exceeding love by which we are saved from condemnation, by which we expect to be rescued from death; knowing that the power of our blessed Lord is equal to his love, and that he is "able to subdue all things to himself." *Sherlock.*

§ 129. *Christ and Mahomet compared.*

Go to your natural religion, lay before her Mahomet and his disciples arrayed in armour and in blood, riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands and ten thousands, who fell by his victorious sword. Show her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him in this scene, carry her into his retirements, show her the prophet's chamber, his concubines and wives, and let her see his adulteries, and hear him allege revelation and his divine commission to justify his lusts and his oppressions. When she is tired with this prospect, then show her the blessed Jesus, humble and meek, doing good to all the sons of men, patiently instructing the ignorant and the perverse. Let her see him in his most retired privacies, let her follow him to the mount and hear his devotions and supplications to God. Carry her to his table, to view his poor fare and hear his heavenly discourse. Let her see him injured but not provoked; let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies. Lead her to his cross, and let her view him in the agonies of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When natural religion has viewed both, ask which is the prophet of God?—— But her answer we have already had, when she saw part of this scene through the eyes of the Centurion who attended at the cross: by him she said, "Truly this was the son of God." *Sherlock.*

§ 130. *The state of idolatry, and the conduct of Socrates, and other wise men, respecting it, a proof of the necessity of revelation.*

To prove the truth of the assertion, that even the wise men, who knew God, did not glorify him as God, let us consider the case of one only; but of one who, among the good men was the best, and among the wise ones the wisest. I shall easily be understood to mean Socrates, the great philosopher of Athens; and were the wise men of antiquity to plead their cause in common, they could not put their defence into better hands.

We have an account of the speculative opinions of many of the wise men of Greece preserved to us in authors of great credit; but of their practice and personal behaviour in life, little is said: which makes it hard to judge how far their own practice and conduct was influenced by their opinions, and how consistent they were in pursuing the consequences of their own doctrines. The case might have been the same with Socrates, had not a very particular circumstance put him under the necessity of explaining his conduct and practice, with respect to the religion of his country. He had talked so freely of the heathen deities, and the ridiculous stories told of them, that he fell under a suspicion of despising the gods of his country, and of teaching the youth of Athens to despise their altars and their worship. Upon this accusation he is summoned before the great court of the Areopagites, and happily the apology he made for himself is preserved to us by two, the ablest of his scholars, and the best writers of antiquity, Plato and Xenophon; and from both their accounts it appears, that Socrates maintained and asserted before his judges, that he worshipped the gods of his country, and that he sacrificed in private and in public upon the allowed altars, and according to the rites and customs of the city. After this public confession, so authentically reported by two so able hands, there can be no doubt of the case. He was an idolater, and had not by his great knowledge and ability in reasoning delivered himself from the practice of the superstition of his country. You see how far the wisdom of the world could go. Give me leave to show you what the foolishness of preaching could do in the very same case.

St. Paul was in the same case. He was accused in the same city of Athens of the same crime, that he was a setter forth of strange gods; and before the same court of the Areopagites he made his apology, which is likewise preserved to us by St. Luke. We have then the greatest and ablest among the wise men of Greece, and an apostle of Christ in the same circumstances. You have heard the philosopher's defence, that he worshipped the gods of his country, and as his country worshipped them. Hear now the apostle. 'Ye men of Athens,' says he, 'I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious; for, as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you: God, that made the world, and all things therein. This God,' he tells them, "is not worshipped with men's hands, as though he needeth any thing:—nor is the Godhead like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." He then calls upon them, in the name of this great God to repent of their superstition and idolatry, which God would no longer bear; 'because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.'

Which of these two now was a preacher of true religion? Let those who value human reason at the highest rate determine.

The manner in which Socrates died was the calmest and bravest in the world, and excludes all pretence to say, that he dissembled his opinion and practice before his judges out of any fear or meanness of spirit: vices with which he was never taxed, and of which he seems to have been incapable.

Consider then, was it possible for any man, upon the authority of Socrates, to open his mouth against the idolatry of the heathen world, or to make use of his name to that purpose, who had solemnly, in the face of his country, and before the greatest judicature of Greece, bore testimony to the gods of his country, and the worship paid them?

But to proceed. The city of Athens soon grew sensible of the injury done to the best and wisest of their citizens, and of their great mistake in putting Socrates to death. His accusers and his judges became infamous; and the people grew extravagant in doing honours to the memory of the innocent sufferer. They erected a statue, nay a temple to his memory; and his name was had in honour and reverence. His doctrines upon the subjects of divinity and morality were introduced in the world with all the advantages that the ablest and politest pens could give; and they became the study and entertainment of all the considerable men who lived after him. It is worth observing too, that from the death of Socrates to the birth of Christ were, if I remember right, near four hundred years; which was time sufficient to make the experiment how far the wisdom of Socrates, with all the advantages before mentioned, could go in reforming the world. And what was the effect of all this? Can you name the place where religion was reformed? Can you name the man who was so far reformed, as to renounce the superstition of his country? No: none such are to be found: and how should there? Since the greater the credit and reputation of Socrates were, the more strongly did they draw men to imitate his example, and to worship as their country worshipped.

Consider, on the other side, what was the consequence of preaching the gospel. St. Paul entertained the Athenians with no fine speculation; but he laid before them, in the plainest dress, the great and momentous truths of religion; he openly rebuked their idolatry, and condemned their superstition. The gospel was published in the same manner every where. The first preachers of it were enabled to support it by miracles, and most of them shed their blood in defence of its truth. By these means they came also to have credit and authority in the world. But in these two cases there was a great difference. The corrupt example of Socrates was a dead weight upon the purity of his doctrine, and tended to perpetuate superstition in the world: the authority and example of the apostles went hand in hand, and united their force to root out idolatry. There was this farther difference too: the doctrines of Socrates could go only among the learned; the doctrines of the gospel were artless and plain, and suited to every man's capacity.

For near four hundred years the disciples of Socrates had the world to themselves, to reform it if they could; in all which time there is no evidence remaining that the religion of the world was the better for their wisdom. But in much less time the gospel prevailed in most parts of the known world. Wherever it came, superstition and idolatry fled before it; and in little more than three centuries the empire became Christian; which completed the victory over the heathen deities. *Sherlock.*

§ 131. *The absurdity and madness of infidelity.*

If a person that had a fair estate in reversion, which in all probability he would speedily be possessed of, and of which he might reasonably promise to himself a long and happy enjoyment, should be assured by some skilful physician, that in a very short time he would inevitably fall into a disease which would so totally deprive him of his understanding and memory, that he should lose the knowledge of all things without him, nay, all consciousness and sense of his own person and being: if, I say, upon a certain belief of this indication, the man should appear overjoyed at the news, and be mightily transported with the discovery and expectation, would not all that saw him be astonished at such behaviour? Would they not be forward to conclude, that the distemper had seized him already, and even then the miserable creature was become a mere fool and an idiot? Now the carriage of our atheists is infinitely more amazing than this; no dotage so infatuate, no phrensy so extravagant as theirs. They have been educated in a religion that instructed them in the knowledge of a Supreme Being? a Spirit most excellently glorious, superlatively powerful, and wise, and good, Creator of all things out of nothing; that hath endued the sons of men, his peculiar favourites, with a rational spirit, and hath placed them as spectators in this noble theatre of the world, to view and applaud these glorious scenes of earth and heaven, the workmanship of his hands; that hath furnished them in general with a sufficient store of all things, either necessary or convenient for life; and, particularly to such as fear and obey him, hath promised a supply of all wants, a deliverance and protection from all dangers; that they that seek him shall want no manner of thing that is good. Who, besides his munificence to them in this life, "hath so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, the express image of his substance," and partaker of his eternal nature and glory, to bring life and immortality to light, and to tender them to mankind upon fair and gracious terms; that if they submit to his easy yoke and light burden, and observe his commandments, which are not grievous, he then gives them the promise of eternal salvation; he hath reserved for them in heaven, "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away;" he hath prepared for them an unspeakable, unconceivable perfection of joy and bliss, things that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." What a delightful ravishing hypothesis of religion is this? And in this religion they have had their education. Now let us suppose some great professor in atheism to suggest to some of these men, that all this is mere dream and imposture; that there is no such excellent being, as they suppose, that created and preserves them; that all about them is dark senseless matter, driven on by the blind impulses of fatality and fortune; that men first sprung up, like mushrooms, out of the mud and slime of the earth; and that all their thoughts and the whole of what they call soul, are only the various action and repercussion of small particles of matter, kept awhile a moving by some mechanism and clock-work, which finally must cease and perish by death. If it be true then (as we daily find it is) that men listen with complacency to these horrid suggestions; if they let go their hope of everlasting life with willingness and joy; if they entertain the thoughts of final perdition with exultation and triumph; ought they not to be esteemed most notorious fools, even destitute of common sense, and abandoned to a callousness and numbness of soul?

What then, is heaven itself, with its pleasures for evermore, to be parted with so unconcernedly? Is a crown of righteousness, a crown of life, to be surrendered with laughter? Is an exceeding and eternal weight of glory too light in the balance against the hopeless death of the atheist, and utter extinction? *Bentley.*

§ 132. *The Extent, Object, and End of the prophetic Scheme.*

If we look into the writings of the Old and New Testament we find, first, That prophecy is of a prodigious extent; that it commenced from the lapse of man, and reaches to the consummation of all things; that, for many ages, it was delivered darkly, to few persons, and with large intervals from the date of one prophecy to that of another; but, at length, became more clear, more frequent, and was uniformly carried on in the line of one people, separated from the rest of the world, among other reasons assigned, for this principally, to be the repository of the Divine Oracles; that, with some intermission, the spirit of prophecy subsisted among that people, to the coming of Christ; that he himself and his apostles exercised this power in the most conspicuous manner; and left behind them many predictions, recorded in the books of the New Testament, which profess to respect very distant events, and even run out to the end of time, or, in St. John's expression, to that period, "when the mystery of God shall be perfected."

2. Further, besides the extent of this prophetic scheme, the dignity of the person, whom it concerns, deserves our consideration. He is described in terms, which excite the most august and magnificent ideas. He is spoken of, indeed, sometimes as being "the seed of the woman," and as "the son of man;" yet so as being at the same time of more than mortal extraction. He is even represented to us, as being superior to men and angels; as far above all principality and power, above all that is accounted great, whether in heaven or in earth; as the word and wisdom of God; as the eternal Son of the Father; as "the heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds;" as "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

We have no words to denote greater ideas than these; the mind of man cannot elevate itself to nobler conceptions. Of such transcendent worth and excellence is that Jesus said to be, to whom all the prophets bear witness!

3. Lastly, the declared purpose, for which the Messiah, prefigured by so long a train of prophecy, came into the world, corresponds to all the rest of the representation. It was not to deliver an oppressed nation from civil tyranny, or to erect a great civil empire, that is, to achieve one of those acts, which history accounts most heroic. No, it was not a mighty state, a victor people—

Non res Romanæ perituraque regna—

that was worthy to enter into the contemplation of this divine person. It was another and far sublimer purpose, which he came to accomplish; a purpose, in comparison of which, all our policies are poor and little, and all the performances of man as nothing. It was to deliver a world from ruin; to abolish sin and death; to purify and immortalize human nature; and thus, in the most exalted sense of the words, to be the Saviour of all men, and the blessing of all nations.

There is no exaggeration in this account, I deliver the undoubted sense, if not always the very words of Scripture.

Consider then to what this representation amounts. Let us unite the several parts of it, and bring them to a point. A spirit of prophecy pervading all time—characterizing one person, of the highest dignity—and proclaiming the accomplishment of one purpose, the most beneficent, the most divine, that imagination itself can project.—Such is the scriptural delineation, whether we will receive it or no, of that economy, which we call prophetic!

And now then (if we must be reasoning from our ideas of fit and right, to the rectitude of the divine conduct) let me ask, in one word, whether, on the supposition that it should ever please the moral Governor of the world to reveal himself by prophecy at all, we can conceive him to do it, in a "manner," or for "ends," more worthy of him? Does not the "extent" of the scheme correspond to our best ideas of that infinite Being, to whom all duration is but a point, and to whose view all time is equally present? Is not the "object" of this scheme, "the Lamb of God that was slain from the foundation of the world," worthy, in our conceptions, of all the honour that can be reflected upon him by so vast and splendid an economy? Is not the "end" of this scheme such as we should think most fit for such a scheme of prophecy to predict, and for so divine a person to accomplish?

You see, every thing here is of a piece; all the parts of this dispensation are astonishingly great, and perfectly harmonize with each other.

Hurd.

§ 133. *Our philosophical principles must be learnt from the book of Nature, our religious from the book of Grace.*

In order to attain right conceptions of the constitution of Nature, as laid before us in the volume of Creation, we are not to assume hypotheses and notions of our own, and from them, as from established principles, to account for the several phenomena that occur; but we are to begin with the effects themselves, and from these, diligently collected in a variety of well-chosen experiments, to investigate the causes which produce them. By such a method, directed and improved by the helps of a sublime geometry, we may reasonably hope to arrive at certainty in our physical inquiries, and on the basis of fact and demonstration may erect a system of the world, that shall be true, and worthy of its author. Whereas, by pursuing a contrary path, our conjectures at the best will be precarious and doubtful; nor can we ever be sure that the most ingenious theories we can frame are any thing more than a well-invented and consistent fable.

With the same caution we are to proceed in examining the constitution of Grace, as unfolded to our view in the volume of Redemption. Here also we are not to excogitate conceits and fancies of our own, and then distort the expressions of holy writ, to favour our misshapen imaginations; but we are first to advert to what God has actually made known of himself in the declarations of his word; and from this, carefully interpreted by the rules of sound criticism and logical deduction, to elicit the genuine doctrines of revelation. By such an exertion of our intellectual powers, assisted and enlightened by the aids which human literature is capable of furnishing, we may advance with ease and safety in our knowledge of the divine dispensations, and on the rock of Scripture may build a system of religion, that shall approve itself to our most enlarged understandings, and be equally secured from the injuries and insults of enthusiasts and unbelievers. On the other hand, previously to determine from our own reason what it is fit for a being of infinite wisdom to do, and from that pretended fitness to infer that he has really done it, is a mode of procedure that is little suited to the imbecility of our mental faculties, and still less calculated to lead us to an adequate comprehension of the will or works of Heaven. *Hallifax.*

§ 134. *Comparison between Heathenism and Christianity.*

The apostle saith, "After the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God to save believers by the foolishness of preaching." That is to say, since the mere systems of reason were eventually insufficient for the salvation of mankind; and since it was impossible that their speculations should obtain the true knowledge of God; God took another way to instruct them: he revealed by preaching of the gospel what the light of nature could not discover, so that the system of Jesus Christ and his apostles supplied all that was wanting in the systems of the ancient philosophers.

But it is not in relation to the ancient philosophers only, that we mean to consider the proposition in our text; we will examine it also in reference to modern philosophy. Our philosophers know more than all those of Greece knew; but their science which is of unspeakable advantage, while it contains itself within its proper sphere, becomes a source of errors, when it is extended beyond it. Human reason now lodgeth itself in new intrenchments, when it refuseth to submit to the faith. It even puts on new armour to attack it, after it hath invented new methods of self-defence. Under pretence that natural science hath made greater progress, revelation is despised. Under pretence that modern notions of God the Creator are purer than those of the ancients, the yoke of God the Redeemer is broken off. We are going to employ the remaining part of this discourse in justifying the proposition of St. Paul, in the sense that we have given it: we are going to endeavour to prove that revealed religion hath advantages infinitely superior to natural religion: that the greatest geniuses are incapable of discovering by their own reason all the truths necessary to salvation: and that it displays the goodness of God, not to abandon us to the uncertainties of our own wisdom, but to make us the rich present of revelation.

We will enter into this discussion, by placing on the one side a philosopher contemplating the works of nature: on the other, a disciple of Jesus Christ receiving the doctrines of revelation. To each we will give four subjects to examine: the attributes of God: the nature of man: the means of appeasing the remorse of concience: and a future state. From their judgments on each of these subjects, evidence will arise of the superior worth of that revelation, which some minute philosophers affect to despise, and above which they prefer that rough draught, which they sketch out by their own learned speculations.

1. Let us consider a disciple of natural religion, and a disciple of revealed religion meditating on the attributes of God. When the disciple of natural religion considers the symmetry of this universe; when he observes that admirable uniformity, which appears in the succession of seasons, and in the constant rotation of night and day; when he remarks the exact motions of the heavenly bodies: the flux, and reflux of the sea, so ordered that billows, which swell into mountains, and seem to threaten the world with an universal deluge, break away on the shore, and respect on the beach the command of the Creator, who said to the sea, "hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed;" when he attends to all these marvellous works, he will readily conclude, that the Author of nature is a being powerful and wise. But when he observes winds, tempests, and earthquakes, which seem to threaten the reduction of nature to its primitive chaos; when he sees the sea overflow its banks, and burst the enormous moles, that the industry of mankind had raised; his speculations will be perplexed, he will imagine he sees characters of infirmity among so many proofs of creative perfection and power.

When he thinks that God, having

enriched the habitable world with innumerable productions of infinite worth to the inhabitant, hath placed man here as a sovereign in a superb palace; when he considers how admirably God hath proportioned the divers parts of the creation to the construction of the human body, the air to the lungs, aliments to the different humours of the body, the medium by which objects are rendered visible to the eyes, that, by which sounds are communicated to the ears; when he remarks how God hath connected man with his own species, and not with animals of another kind; how he hath distributed talents, so that some requiring the assistance of others, all should be mutually united together; how he hath bound men together by invisible ties, so that one cannot see another in pain without a sympathy, that inclines him to relieve him: when the disciple of natural religion meditates on these grand subjects, he concludes that the Author of nature is a beneficent being. But, when he sees the innumerable miseries to which men are subject; when he finds, that every creature, which contributes to support, contributes at the same time to destroy us; when he thinks, that the air, which assists respiration, conveys epidemical diseases, and imperceptible poisons; that aliments, which nourish us, are often our bane; that the animals, that serve us, often turn savage against us; when he observes the perfidiousness of society, the mutual industry of mankind in tormenting each other; the arts which they invent to deprive one another of life; when he attempts to reckon up the innumerable maladies that consume us; when he considers death, which bows the loftiest heads, dissolves the firmest cements, and subverts the best-founded fortunes; when he makes these reflections, he will be apt to doubt whether it be goodness, or the contrary attribute, that inclineth the Author of our being to give us existence. When the disciple of natural religion reads those reverses of fortune, of which history furnisheth a great many examples: when he seeth tyrants fall from a pinnacle of grandeur; wicked men often punished by their own wickedness, the avaricious punished by the objects of their avarice, the ambitious by those of their ambition, the voluptuous by those of their voluptuousness: when he perceives that the laws of virtue are so essential to public happiness, that without them society would become a banditti, at least, that society is more or less happy, or miserable, according to its looser or closer attachment to virtue; when he considers all these cases, he will probably conclude that the Author of this universe is a just and holy being. But, when he sees tyranny established, vice enthroned, humility in confusion, pride wearing a crown, and love to holiness sometimes exposing people to many and intolerable calamities; he will not be able to justify God, amidst the darkness in which his equity is involved in the government of the world.

But, of all these mysteries, can one be proposed, which the Gospel doth not unfold; or, at least, is there one, on which it doth not give us some principles that are sufficient to conciliate it with the perfections of the Creator, how opposite soever it may seem?

Do the disorders of the world puzzle the disciple of natural religion, and produce difficulties in his mind? With the principles of the Gospel I can solve them all. When it is remembered that this world hath been defiled by the sin of man, and that he is, therefore, an object of divine displeasure; when the principle is admitted, that the world is not now what it was, when it came out of the hands of God; and that, in comparison with its pristine state, it is only a heap of ruins, the truly magnificent, but actually ruinous heap of an edifice of incomparable beauty, the rubbish of which is far more proper to excite our grief for the loss of its primitive grandeur, than to suit our present wants. When these reflections are made, can we find any objections, in the disorders of the world, against the wisdom of our Creator?

Are the miseries of man, and is the fatal necessity of death, in contemplation? With the principles of the Gospel, I solve the difficulties, which these sad objects produce in the mind of the disciple of natural religion. If the principles of Christianity be admitted, if we allow that the afflictions of good men are profitable to them, and that, in many cases, prosperity would be fatal to them; if we grant, that the present is a transitory state, and that this momentary life will be succeeded by an immortal state; if we recollect the many similar truths, which the Gospel abundantly declares; can we find, in human miseries, and in the necessity of dying, objections against the goodness of the Creator?

Do the prosperities of bad men, and adversities of the good, confuse our ideas of God? With the principles of the Gospel, I can remove all the difficulties, which these different conditions produce in the mind of the disciple of natural religion. If the principles of the Gospel be admitted, if we be persuaded that the tyrant, whose prosperity astonishes us, fulfils the counsel of God; if ecclesiastical history assures us, that Herods, and Pilates, themselves contributed to the establishment of that very Christianity, which they meant to destroy; especially, if we admit a state of future rewards and punishments; can the obscurity, in which providence hath been pleased to wrap up some of its designs, raise doubts about the justice of the Creator?

In regard, then, to the first object of contemplation, the perfection of the nature of God, revealed religion is infinitely superior to natural religion; the disciple of the first religion is infinitely wiser than the pupil of the last.

II. Let us consider these two disciples examining the nature of man, and endeavouring to know themselves. The disciple of natural religion cannot know mankind; he cannot perfectly understand the nature, the obligations, the duration of man.

1. The disciple of natural religion can only imperfectly know the nature of man, the difference of the two substances, of which he is composed. His reason, indeed, may speculate the matter, and he may perceive that there is no relation between motion and thought, between the dissolution of a few fibres and violent sensations of pain, between an agitation of humours and profound reflections; he may infer from two different effects, that there ought to be two different causes, a cause of motion, and a cause of sensation, a cause of agitating humours, and a cause of reflecting, that there is body, and that there is spirit.

But, in my opinion, those philosophers, who are best acquainted with the nature of man, cannot account for two difficulties, that are proposed to them, when, on the mere principles of reason, they affirm, that man is composed of the two substances of matter and mind. I ask, first, Do ye so well understand matter, are your ideas of it so complete, that ye can affirm, for certain, it is susceptible of nothing more than this, or that? Are ye sure that it implies a contradiction to affirm, it hath one property, which hath escaped your observation? And, consequently, can ye actually demonstrate, that the essence of matter is incompatible with thought? Since, when ye cannot discover the union of an attribute with a subject, ye instantly conclude, that two attributes, which seem to you to have no relation, suppose too different subjects: and since ye conclude that extent and thought compose two different subjects, body and soul, because ye can discover no natural relation between extent and thought; if I discover a third attribute, which appears to me entirely unconnected with both extent and thought, I shall have a right, in my turn, to admit three subjects in man; matter, which is the subject of extent; mind, which is the subject of thought; and a third subject, which belongs to the attribute, that seems to me to have no relation to either matter or mind. Now I do know such an attribute: but I do not know to which of your two subjects I ought to refer it: I mean sensation. I find it in my nature, and I experience it every hour. But I am altogether at a loss, whether I ought to attribute it to body, or to spirit. I perceive no more natural and necessary relation between sensation and motion, than between sensation and thought.

There are, then, on your principle, three substances in man, one the substratum, which is the subject of extension; another, which is the subject of thought; and a third, which is the subject of sensation: or rather, I suspect, there is only one substance in man, which is known to me very imperfectly, to which all these attributes belong, and which are united together, although I am not able to discover their relation.

Revealed religion removes these difficulties, and decides the question. It tells us, that there are two beings in man, and, if I may express myself so, two different men, the material man, and the immaterial man. The Scriptures spake on these principles, thus; "The dust shall return to the earth as it was," this is the material man: "The spirit shall return to God who gave it," this is the immaterial man. "Fear not them which kill the body," that is to say, the material man: "fear him, which is able to destroy the soul," that is, the immaterial man. "We are willing to be absent from the body," that is from the material man: "and to be present with the Lord," that is to say, to have the immaterial man disembodied. "They stoned Stephen," that is, the material man: "calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," that is to say, receive the immaterial man.

2. The disciple of natural religion can obtain only an imperfect knowledge of the obligations, or duties of man. Natural religion may indeed conduct him to a certain point, and tell him, that he ought to love his benefactor, and various similar maxims. But is natural religion, think ye, sufficient to account for that contrariety, of which every man is conscious, that opposition between inclination and obligation? A very solid argument, I grant, in favour of moral rectitude ariseth from observing, that, to whatever degree a man may carry his sin, whatever efforts he may make to eradicate those seeds of virtue from his heart, which nature has sown there, he cannot forbear venerating virtue, and recoiling at vice. This is certainly a proof, that the Author of our being meant to forbid vice, and to enjoin virtue. But is there no room for complaint? Is there nothing specious in the following objection? As, in spite of all my endeavours to destroy virtuous dispositions, I cannot help respecting virtue, ye infer, that the Author of my being intended I should be virtuous; so, as, in spite of all my endeavours to eradicate vice, I cannot help loving vice, have I not reason for inferring, in my turn, that, the Author of my being designed I should be vicious; or, at least, that he cannot

justly impute guilt to me for performing those actions, which proceed from some principles, that were born with me? Is there no show of reason in this famous sophism? Reconcile the God of nature with the God of religion. Explain how the God of religion can forbid what the God of nature inspires; and how he, who follows those dictates, which the God of nature inspires, can be punished for so doing by the God of religion.

The Gospel unfolds this mystery. It attributes this seed of corruption to the depravity of nature. It attributeth the respect, that we feel for virtue, to the remains of the image of God, in which we were formed, and which can never be entirely effaced. Be cause we were born in sin, the Gospel concludes, that we ought to apply all our attentive endeavours to eradicate the seeds of corruption. And, because the image of the Creator is partly erased from our hearts, the Gospel concludes, that we ought to give ourselves wholly to the retracing of it, and so to answer the excellence of our extraction.

3. A disciple of natural religion can obtain only an imperfect knowledge of the duration of man, whether his soul be immortal, or whether it be involved in the ruin of matter. Reason, I allow, advanceth some solid arguments in proof of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. For what necessity is there for supposing, that the soul, which is a spiritual, indivisible, and immaterial being, that constitutes a whole, and is a distinct being, although united to a portion of matter, should cease to exist, when its union with the body is dissolved? A positive act of the Creator is necessary to the annihilation of a substance. The annihilating of a being, that subsists, requireth an act of power similar to that which gave it existence at first. Now, far from having any ground to believe that God will cause his power to intervene to annihilate our souls, every thing, that we know, persuadeth us, that he himself hath engraven characters of immortality on them, and that he will preserve them for ever. Enter into thy heart, frail creature! see, feel, consider those grand ideas, those immortal designs, that thirst for existing, which a thousand ages cannot quench, and in these lines and points behold the finger of thy Creator writing a promise of immortality to thee. But, how solid soever these arguments may be, however evident in themselves, and striking to a philosopher, they are objectionable, because they are not popular, but above vulgar minds, to whom the bare terms, spirituality and existence, are entirely barbarous, and convey no meaning at all.

Moreover, the union between the operations of the soul, and those of the body, is so close, that all the philosophers in the world cannot certainly determine, whether, the operations of the body ceasing, the operations of the soul do not cease with them. I see a body in perfect health, the mind, therefore, is sound. The same body is disordered, and the mind is disconcerted with it. The brain is filled, and the soul is instantly confused. The brisker the circulation of the blood is, the quicker the ideas of the mind are, and the more extensive its knowledge. At length death comes, and dissolves all the parts of the body; and how difficult is it to persuade one's self, that the soul, which was affected with every former motion of the body, will not be dissipated by its entire dissolution!

Are they the vulgar only, to whom philosophical arguments for the immortality of the soul appear deficient in evidence? Do not superior geniuses require, at least, an explanation of what rank ye assign to beasts, on the principle, that nothing capable of ideas and conceptions, can be involved in a dissolution of matter? Nobody would venture to affirm now, in an assembly of philosophers, what was some time ago maintained with great warmth, that beasts are mere self-moving machines. Experience seems to demonstrate the falsity of the metaphysical reasonings, that have been proposed in favour of this opinion; and we cannot observe the actions of beasts, without being inclined to infer one of these two consequences: either the spirit of man is mortal, like his body; or the souls of beasts are immortal, like those of mankind.

Revelation dissipates all our obscurities, and teacheth us clearly, and without a may be, that God willeth our immortality. It carries our thoughts forward to a future state, as to a fixed period, whither the greatest part of the promises of God tend. It commandeth us, indeed, to consider all the blessings of this life, the aliments that nourish us, the rays which enlighten us, the air that we breathe, sceptres, crowns, and kingdoms, as effects of the liberality of God, and as grounds of our gratitude. But, at the same time, it requireth us to surmount the most magnificent earthly objects. It commandeth us to consider light, air, and aliments, crowns, sceptres, and kingdoms, as unfit to constitute the felicity of a soul created in the image of the blessed God, and with whom the blessed God hath formed a close and intimate union. It assureth us, that an age of life cannot fill the wish of duration, which it is the noble prerogative of an immortal soul to form. It doth not ground the doctrine of immortality on metaphysical speculations, nor on complex arguments, uninvestigable by the greatest part of mankind, and which always leave some doubts in the minds of the ablest philosophers. The gospel grounds the doctrine on the only principle that can support the weight, with which it is encumbered. The principle, which I mean, is the will of the Creator, who, having created our souls at first by an act of his will, can either eternally preserve them, or absolutely annihilate them, whether they be material, or spiritual, mortal, or immortal, by nature. Thus the disciple of revealed religion doth not float between doubt and assurance, hope and fear, as the disciple of nature doth. He is not obliged to leave the most interesting question, that poor mortals can agitate, undecided; whether their souls perish with their bodies, or survive their ruins. He does not say, as Cyrus said to his children; I know not how to persuade myself, that the soul lives in this mortal body, and ceaseth to be, when the body expires. I am more inclined to think, that it requires after death more penetration and purity. He doth not say, as Socrates said to his judges; And now we are going, I to suffer death, and ye to enjoy life. God only knows which is the best. He doth not say as Cicero said, speaking on this important article; I do not pretend to say, that what I affirm is as infallible as the Pythian oracle, I speak only by conjecture. The disciple of revelation, authorized by the testimony of Jesus Christ, "who hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel;" boldly affirms, "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. We, that are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that, which I have committed unto him, against that day."

III. We are next to consider the disciple of natural religion, and the disciple of revealed religion, at the tribunal of God as penitents solicit-ing for pardon. The former cannot find even by feeling after it, in natural religion, according to the language of St. Paul, the grand mean of reconciliation, which God hath given to the church; I mean the sacrifice of the cross. Reason, indeed, discovers, that man is guilty, as the confessions, and acknowledgments, which the Heathens made of their crimes, prove. It discerns, that a sinner deserves punishment, as the remorse and fear, with which their consciences were often excruciated, demonstrate. It presumes, indeed, that God will yield to the entreaties of his creatures, as their prayers, and temples, and altars testify. It even goes so far as to perceive the necessity of satisfying divine justice, this their sacrifices, this their burnt offerings, this their human victims, this the rivers of blood, that flowed on their altars, show.

But, how likely soever all these speculations may be, they form only a systematic body without a head; for no positive promise of pardon from God himself belongs to them. The mystery of the cross is entirely invisible; for only God could reveal that, because only God could plan, and only he could execute that profound relief. How could human reason, alone and unassisted, have discovered the mystery of redemption, when, alas! after an infallible God hath revealed it, reason is absorbed in its depth, and needs all its submission to receive it, as an article of faith?

But that, which natural religion cannot attain, revealed religion clearly discovers. Revelation exhibits a God-Man, dying for the sins of mankind and setting grace before every penitent sinner: grace for all mankind. The schools have often agitated the questions, and sometimes indiscreetly, whether Jesus Christ died for all mankind, or only for a small number? Whether his blood were shed for all, who hear the gospel, or for those only, who believe it? We will not dispute these points now: but we will venture to affirm, that there is not an individual of all our hearers, who hath not a right to say to himself, if I believe, I shall be saved; I shall believe, if I endeavour to believe. Consequently, every individual hath a right to apply the benefits of the death of Christ to himself. The gospel reveals grace, that pardons the most atrocious crimes, those that have the most fatal influences. Although ye have denied Christ with Peter, betrayed him with Judas, persecuted him with Saul; yet the blood of a God-Man is sufficient to obtain your pardon, if ye be in the covenant of redemption. Grace, which is accessible at all times, at every instant of life. Woe be to you, my brethren; woe be to you if, abusing this reflection, ye delay your return to God till the last moments of your lives, when your repentance will be difficult, not to say impracticable and impossible! But it is always certain, that God every instant opens the treasures of his mercy, when sinners return to him by sincere repentance. Grace, capable of terminating all the melancholy thoughts that are produced by the fear of being abandoned by God in the midst of our race, and of having the work of salvation left imperfect. For, after he hath given us a present so magnificent, what can he refuse? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Grace, so clearly revealed in our Scriptures, that the most accurate reasoning, heresy the most extravagant, and infidelity the most obstinate, cannot enervate his declarations. For, the death of Christ may be considered in different views: it is a sufficient confirmation of his doctrine; it is a perfect pattern of patience, it is the most magnanimous degree of extraordinary excellencies, that can be imagined: but the gospel very seldom presents it to us in any of these views, it leaves them to our own perception; but when it speaks of his death, it usually speaks of it as an expiatory sacrifice. Need we repeat here a number of formal texts, and express decisions on this matter? Thanks be to God, we are preaching to a Christian auditory, who make the death of the Redeemer the foundation of faith! The gospel, then, assureth the penitent sinner of pardon. Zeno, Epicurus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Porch, Academy, Lycæum, what have ye to offer to your disciples, equal to this promise of the gospel?

IV. But that, which principally displays the prerogatives of the Christian above those of the philosopher, is an all-sufficient provision against the fear of death. A comparison between a dying Pagan and a dying Christian will show this. I consider a Pagan, in his dying-bed, speaking to himself what follows. On which side soever I consider my state, I perceive nothing but trouble and despair. If I observe the fore-runners of death, I see awful symptoms, violent sickness, and intolerable pain, which surround my sick-bed, and are the first scenes of the bloody tragedy. As to the world, my dearest objects disappear; my closest connexions are dissolving; my most specious titles are effacing; my noblest privileges are vanishing away; a dismal curtain falls between my eyes and all the decorations of the universe. In regard to my body, it is a mass without motion, and life: my tongue is about to be condemned to eternal silence; my eyes to perpetual darkness; all the organs of my body to entire dissolution; and the miserable remains of my carcass to lodge in the grave, and to become food for the worms. If I consider my soul, I scarcely know whether it be immortal; and could I demonstrate its natural immortality, I should not be able to say, whether my Creator would display his attributes in preserving, or in destroying it; whether my wishes for immortality be the dictates of nature, or the language of sin. If I consider my past life, I have a witness within me, attesting that my practice hath been less than my knowledge, how small soever the latter hath been; and that the abundant depravity of my heart hath thickened the darkness of my mind. If I consider futurity, I think I discover through many thick clouds a future state; my reason suggests, that the Author of nature hath not given me a soul so sublime in thought, and so expansive in desire, merely to move in this little orb for a moment: but this is nothing but conjecture; and, if there be another economy after this, should I be less miserable than I am here? One moment I hope for annihilation, the next I shudder with the fear of being annihilated: my thoughts and desires are at war with each other, they rise, they resist, they destroy one another. Such is the dying Heathen. If a few examples of those, who have died otherwise, be adduced, they ought not to be urged in evidence against what we have advanced; for they are rare, and very probably deceptive, their outward tranquillity being only a concealment of trouble within. Trouble is the greater for confinement within, and for an affected appearance without. As we ought not to believe, that philosophy hath rendered men insensible of pain, because some philosophers have maintained that pain is no evil, and have seemed to triumph over it: so neither ought we to believe, that it hath disarmed death in regard to the disciples of natural religion, because some have affirmed, that death is not an object of fear. After all, if some Pagans enjoyed a real tranquillity at death, it was a groundless tranquillity, to which reason contributed nothing at all.

O! how differently do Christians die! How doth revealed religion triumph over the religion of nature in this respect! May each of our hearers be a new evidence of this article! The whole that troubles an expiring Heathen, revives a Christian in his dying bed.

Thus speaks the dying Christian. When I consider the awful symptoms of death, and the violent agonies of dissolving nature, they appear to me as medical preparations, sharp, but salutary; they are necessary to detach me from life, and to separate the remains of inward depravity from me. Beside, I shall not be abandoned to my own frailty; but my patience and constancy will be proportional to my sufferings, and that powerful arm, which hath supported me through life, will uphold me under the pressure of death. If I consider my sins, many as they are, I am invulnerable; for I go to a tribunal of mercy, where God is reconciled, and justice is satisfied. If I consider my body, I perceive, I am putting off a mean and corruptible habit, and putting on robes of glory. Fall, fall, ye imperfect senses, ye frail organs, fall, house of clay, into your original dust; ye will be "sown in corruption, but raised in incorruption; sown in dishonour, but raised in glory; sown in weakness, but raised in power." If I consider my soul, it is passing, I see, from slavery to freedom. I shall carry with me that which thinks and reflects. I shall carry with me the delicacy of taste, the harmony of sounds, the beauty of colours, the fragrance of odoriferous smells. I shall surmount heaven and earth, nature and all terrestrial things, and my ideas of all their beauties will multiply and expand. If I consider the future economy, to which I go, I have, I own, very inadequate notions of it: but my incapacity is the ground of my expectation. Could I perfectly comprehend it, it would argue its resemblance to some of the present objects of my senses, or its minute proportion to the present operations of my mind. If worldly dignities and grandeurs, if accumulated treasures, if the enjoyments of the most refined voluptuousness, were to represent to me celestial felicity, I should suppose, that, partaking of their nature, they partook of their vanity. But, if nothing here can represent the future state, it is because that state surpasseth every other. My ardour is increased by my imperfect knowledge of it. My knowledge, and virtue, I know will be perfected; I know I shall comprehend truth, and obey order; I know I shall be free from all evils, and in possession of all good; I shall be present with God, I know, and with all the happy spirits, who surround his throne, and this perfect state, I am sure, will continue for ever and ever.

Such are the all-sufficient supports which revealed religion affords against the fear of death. Such are the meditations of a dying Christian; not of one, whose whole Christianity consists of dry speculations, which have no influence over his practice; but of one, who applies his knowledge to relieve the real wants of his life.

Christianity, then, we have seen, is superior to natural religion, in these four respects. To these we will add a few more reflections in farther evidence of the superiority of revealed religion to the religion of nature.

1. The ideas of the ancient philosophers concerning natural religion were not collected into a body of doctrine. One philosopher had one idea, another studious man had another idea; ideas of truth and virtue, therefore, lay dispersed. Who doth

not see the pre-eminence of revelation, on this article? No human capacity either hath been, or would ever have been equal to the noble conception of a perfect body of truth. There is no genius so narrow, as not to be capable of proposing some clear truth, some excellent maxim: but to lay down principles, and to perceive at once a chain of consequences, these are the efforts of great geniuses; this capability is philosophical perfection. If this axiom be incontestable, what a fountain of wisdom does the system of Christianity argue! It represents us, in one lovely body, of perfect symmetry, all the ideas that we have enumerated. One idea supposeth another idea; and the whole is united in a manner so compact, that it is impossible to alter one particle without defacing the beauty of all.

2. Pagan philosophers never had a system of natural religion comparable with that of modern philosophers, although the latter glory in their contempt of revelation. Modern philosophers have derived the clearest and best parts of their systems from the very revelation which they affect to despise. We grant, the doctrines of the perfections of God, of providence, and of a future state, are perfectly conformable to the light of reason. A man, who should pursue rational tracks of knowledge to his utmost power, would discover, we own, all these doctrines; but it is one thing to grant, that these doctrines are conformable to reason; and it is another to affirm, that reason actually discovered them. It is one thing to allow, that a man, who should pursue rational tracks of knowledge to his utmost power, would discover all these doctrines: and it is another to pretend, that any man hath pursued these tracks to the utmost, and hath actually discovered them. It was the gospel that taught mankind the use of their reason. It was the gospel, that assisted men to form a body of natural religion. Modern philosophers avail themselves of these aids; they form a body of natural religion by the light of the gospel, and then they attribute to their own penetration what they derive from foreign aid.

3. What was most rational in the natural religion of the Pagan philosophers was mixed with fancies and dreams. There was not a single philosopher, who did not adopt some absurdity, and communicate it to his disciples. One taught, that every being was animated with a particular soul, and on this absurd hypothesis he pretended to account for all the phenomena of nature. Another took every star for a god, and thought the soul a vapour, that passed from one body to another, expiating in the body of a beast the sins that were committed in that of a man. One attributed the creation of the world to a blind chance, and the government of all events in it to an inviolable fate. Another affirmed the eternity of the world, and said, there was no period in eternity, in which heaven and earth, nature and elements, were not visible. One said, every thing is uncertain; we are not sure of our own existence; the distinction between just and unjust, virtue and vice, is fanciful, and hath no real foundation in the nature of things. Another made matter equal to God; and maintained, that it concurred with the Supreme Being in the formation of the universe. One took the world for a prodigious body, of which he thought God was the soul. Another affirmed the materiality of the soul, and attributed to matter the faculties of thinking and reasoning. Some denied the immortality of the soul, and the intervention of providence; and pretended, that an infinite number of particles of matter, indivisible, and indestructible, revolved in the

universe; that from their fortuitous concourse arose the present world; that in all this there was no design; that the feet were not formed for walking, the eyes for seeing, nor the hands for handling. The gospel is light without darkness. It hath nothing mean; nothing false; nothing that doth not bear the characters of that wisdom, from which it proceeds.

4. What was pure in the natural religion of the Heathens was not known, nor could be known to any but philosophers. The common people were incapable of that penetration and labour, which the investigating of truth, and the distinguishing of it from that falsehood, in which passion and prejudice had enveloped it, required. A mediocrity of genius, I allow, is sufficient for the purpose of inferring a part of those consequences from the works of nature, of which we form the body of natural religion; but none but geniuses of the first order are capable of kenning those distant consequences, which are enfolded in darkness. The bulk of mankind wanted a short way proportional to every mind. They wanted an authority, the infallibility of which all mankind might easily see. They wanted a revelation founded on evidence plain and obvious to all the world. Philosophers could not show the world such a short way: but revelation hath showed it. No philosopher could assume the authority, necessary to establish such a way; it became God alone to dictate in such a manner, and in revelation he hath done it. *Saurin.*

§ 135. *The Bible superior to all other books.*

In what other writings can we descry those excellencies which we find in the Bible? None of them can equal it in antiquity; for the first penman of the Sacred Scripture hath the start of all philosophers, poets, and historians, and is absolutely the ancientest writer extant in the world. No writings are equal to these of the Bible, if we mention only the stock of human learning contained in them. Here linguists and philologists may find that which is to be found no where else. Here rhetoricians and orators may be entertained with a more lofty eloquence, with a choicer composure of words, and with a greater variety of style, than any other writers can afford them. Here is a book, where more is understood than expressed, where words are few, but the sense is full and redundant. No books equal this in authority, because it is the Word of God himself, and dictated by an unerring Spirit. It excels all other writings in the excellency of its matter, which is the highest, noblest, and worthiest, and of the greatest concern to mankind. Lastly, the Scriptures transcend all other writings in their power and efficacy.—

Wherefore, with great seriousness and importunity, I request the reader that he would entertain such thoughts and persuasions as these, that Bible-learning is the highest accomplishment, that this book is the most valuable of any upon earth, that here is a library in one single volume, that this alone is sufficient for us, though all the libraries in the world were destroyed.

Edwards.

§ 136. *The volume of the Scriptures superior to all other books.*

The Scriptures contain, independently of a divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass, from all other books that were ever composed in any age, or in any idiom. The two parts, of which the Scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance, in form or style, to any that can be produced from the stores of Grecian, Indian, Persian, or even Arabian learning. The antiquity of those compositions no man doubts; and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief, that they were genuine predictions, and consequently inspired.* *Sir William Jones.*

§ 137. *The Mosaic account of the origin of mankind, and of the deluge, confirmed by reason and history.*

I admit without hesitation the aphorism of Linnæus, that, 'in the beginning God created one pair only of every living species, which has a diversity of sex;' but, since that incomparable naturalist argues principally from the wonderful diffusion of vegetables, and from an hypothesis, that the water on this globe has been continually subsiding, I venture to produce a shorter and closer argument in support of his doctrine.

That *Nature*, of which simplicity appears a distinguishing attribute, *does nothing in vain*, is a maxim in philosophy; and against those who deny maxims we cannot dispute: but *it is vain* and superfluous *to do by many means, what may be done by fewer*, and this is another maxim, received into courts of judicature from the schools of the philosophers. 'We must not, therefore,' says our great Newton, 'admit more causes of natural things, than those which are true, and sufficiently account for natural phenomena:' but it is true, that one pair at least of every living species must at first have been created; and that one human pair was sufficient for the population of our globe in a period of no inconsiderable length, (on the very moderate supposition of lawyers and political arithmeticians, that every pair of ancestors left on an average two children, and each of them two more,) is evident from the rapid increase of numbers in geometrical progression, so well known to those who have ever taken the trouble to sum a series of as many terms as they suppose generations of men in two or three thousand years. It follows that the Author of nature (for all nature proclaims its divine Author,) created but one pair of our species; yet, had it not been (among other reasons) for the devastations which history has recorded, of water and fire, war, famine, and pestilence, this earth would not now have had room for its multiplied inhabitants. If the human race then be, as we may confidently assume, of one natural species, they must all have proceeded from one pair; and if perfect justice be, as it is most indubitably, an essential attribute of God, that pair must have been gifted with sufficient wisdom and strength to be virtuous, and, as far as their nature admitted, happy, but intrusted with freedom of will to be vicious, and consequently degraded. Whatever might be their option, they must people in time the region where they first were established, and their numerous descendants must necessarily seek new countries, as inclination might prompt, or accident lead them. They would of course migrate in separate families and clans, which, forgetting by degrees the language of their common progenitor, would form new dialects to convey new ideas, both simple and complex. Natural affection would unite them at first, and a sense of reciprocal utility, the great and only cement of social union in the absence of public honour and justice, for which, in evil times, it is a general substitute, would combine them at length in communities more or less regular; laws would be proposed by a part of each community, but enacted by the whole; and government would be variously arranged for the happiness or misery of the governed, according to their own virtue and wisdom, or depravity and folly: so that, in less than three thousand years, the world would exhibit the same appearances which we may actually observe on it in the age of the great Arabian impostor.

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* We extract this passage from the author's Eighth discourse to the Society for Asiatic Researches. He is said to have written it also at the end of his Bible.—*Editor.*

The most ancient history of the human race, and the oldest composition perhaps in the world, is a work in Hebrew which we may suppose at first, for the sake of our argument, to have no higher authority than any other work of equal antiquity that the researches of the curious had accidentally brought to light. It is ascribed to Musah; for so he writes his own name, which, after the Greeks and Romans, we have changed into Moses; and though it was manifestly his object to give an historical account of a single family, he has introduced it with a short view of the primitive world, and his introduction has been divided, perhaps improperly, into eleven chapters. After describing with awful sublimity the creation of this universe, he asserts, that one pair of every animal species was called from nothing into existence; that the human pair were strong enough to be happy, but free to be miserable; that, from delusion and temerity, they disobeyed their supreme benefactor, whose goodness could not pardon them consistently with his justice; and that they received a punishment adequate to their disobedience, but softened by a mysterious promise to be accomplished in their descendants. We cannot but believe on the supposition just made of a history uninspired, that these facts were delivered by tradition from the first pair, and related by Moses in a figurative style: not in that sort of allegory which rhetoricians describe as a mere assemblage of metaphors, but in the symbolical mode of writing adopted by eastern sages, to embellish and dignify historical truth; and, if this were a time for such illustrations, we might produce the same account of the creation and the fall, expressed by symbols very nearly similar from the *Puranas* themselves, and even from the *Veda* which appears to stand next in antiquity to the five books of Moses.

The sketch of antediluvian history, in which we find many dark passages, is followed by a narrative of a deluge, which destroyed the whole race of man except four pairs; an historical fact admitted as true by every nation to whose literature we have access, and particularly by the ancient Hindus, who have allotted an entire Purana to the detail of that event, which they relate, as usual, in symbols or allegories. I concur most heartily with those who insist, that, in proportion as any fact mentioned in history seems repugnant to the course of nature, or, in one word, miraculous, the stronger evidence is required to induce a rational belief of it; but we hear without incredulity, that cities have been overwhelmed by eruptions from burning mountains, and whole islands depopulated by earthquakes: if then we look at the firmament sprinkled with innumerable stars; if we conclude by a fair analogy that every star is a sun, attracting, like ours, a system of inhabited planets: and if our ardent fancy, soaring hand in hand with sound reason, waft us beyond the visible sphere into other regions of immensity, disclosing other celestial expanses, and other systems of suns and worlds on all sides without number or end, we cannot but consider the submersion of our little spheroid, as an infinitely less event in respect to the immeasurable universe, than the destruction of a city or an isle in respect of this habitable globe.

Thus, on the preceding supposition that the first eleven chapters of the book, which it is thought proper to call Genesis, are merely a preface to the oldest civil history now extant, we see the truth of them confirmed by antecedent reasoning, and by evidence, in part highly probable, and in part certain: but the connexion of the Mosaic history with that of the gospel, by a chain of sublime predictions, unquestionably ancient, and apparently fulfilled, must induce us to think the Hebrew narrative more than human in its origin, and consequently true in every substantial part of it, though possibly expressed in figurative language: as many learned and pious men have believed, and as the most pious may believe without injury, and perhaps with advantage, to the cause of revealed religion.

Sir William Jones.

§ 138. *All the religious knowledge in he world derived from Revelation.*

Deism, or the principles of natural worship, are only the faint remnants or dying flames of revealed religion in the posterity of Noah; and our modern philosophers, nay, and some of our philosophizing divines, have too much exalted the faculties of our souls, when they have maintained that by their force, mankind has been able to find out that there is one supreme agent or intellectual being which we call God; that praise and prayer are his due worship; and the rest of those deducements, which I am confident are the remote effects of revelation, and unattainable by our discourse, I mean as simply considered, and without the benefit of divine illumination. So that we have not lifted up ourselves to God by the weak pinions of our reason, but he has been pleased to descend to us; and what Socrates said of him, what Plato wrote, and the rest of the Heathen philosophers of several nations, is all no more than the twilight of revelation, after the sun of it was set in the race of Noah. That there is something above us, some principle of motion, our reason can apprehend, though it cannot discover what it is by its own virtue. And indeed it is very improbable, that we, who by the strength of our faculties cannot enter into the knowledge of any being, not so much as of our own, should be able to find out by them that Supreme Nature, which we cannot otherwise define than by saying it is infinite; as if infinite were definable, or infinity a subject for our narrow understanding. They who would prove religion by reason, do but weaken the cause which they endeavour to support. It is to take away the pillars from our faith, and prop it only with a twig; it is to design a tower like that of Babal, which, if it were possible, as it is not, to reach heaven, would come to nothing by the confusion of the workmen. For every man is building a several way; impotently conceited of his own model, and of his own materials. Reason is always striving, always at a loss; and of necessity it must so come to pass, while it is exercised about that which is not its proper object. Let us be content at last to know God by his own methods; at least so much of him as he is pleased to reveal to us in the Sacred Scriptures. To apprehend them to be the Word of God, is all our reason has to do; for all beyond it is the work of faith, which is the seal of Heaven impressed upon our human understanding.

Dryden.

§ 139. *A moral demonstration of the truth of the Christian religion.*

This discourse of all the disputables in the world, shall require the fewest things to be granted; even nothing but what was evident; even nothing but the very subject of the question, viz. That there was such a man as Jesus Christ; that he pretended such things, and taught such doctrines: for he that will prove these things to be from God, must be allowed that they were from something or other.

But this postulate I do not ask for need, but for order's sake and art; for what the histories of that age reported as a public affair, as one of the most eminent transactions of the world, that which made so much noise, which caused so many changes, which occasioned so many wars, which divided so many hearts, which altered so many families, which procured so many deaths, which obtained so many laws in favour, and suffered so many rescripts in the disfavour, of itself: that which was not done in a corner, but was thirty-three years and more in acting; which caused so many sects, and was opposed by so much art, and so much power that it might not grow, which filled the world with noise, which effected such great changes in the bodies of men by curing the diseased, and smiting the contumacious or the hypocrites, which drew so many eyes, and filled so many tongues, and employed so many pens, and was the care and the question of the whole world at that time, and immediately after; that which was consigned by public acts and records of courts, which was in the books of friends and enemies, which came accompanied and remarked with eclipses and stars and prodigies of heaven and earth; that which the Jews even in spite and against their wills confessed, and which the witty adversaries intending to overthrow, could never so much as challenge of want of truth in the matter of fact and story; that which they who are infinitely concerned that it should not be believed, or more, that it had never been; do yet only labour to make it appear not to have been divine: certainly, this thing is so certain that it was, that the defenders of it need not account it a kindness to have it presupposed; for never was there any story in the world that had so many degrees of credibility, as the story of the person, life, and death, of Jesus Christ: and if he had not been a true prophet, yet that he was in the world, and said and did such things, cannot be denied; for even concerning Mahomet we make no question but he was in the world, and led a great part of mankind after him, and what was less proved we infinitely believe: and what all men say, and no man denies, and was notorious in itself, of this we may make further inquiries whether it was all that which it pretended; for that it did make pretences and was in the world, needs no more probation.

But now, whether Jesus Christ was sent from God and delivered the will of God, we are to take accounts from all the things of the world which were on him, or about him, or from him.

Bishop Taylor.

§ 140. *Considerations respecting the Person of Jesus Christ.*

I. Consider, first, his person: he was foretold by all the prophets: he, I say, for that appears by the event, and the correspondencies of their sayings to this person: he was described by infallible characterisms, which did fit him, and did never fit any but him; for, when he was born, then was the fulness of time, and the Messias was expected at the time when Jesus did appear, which gave occasion to many of the godly then to wait for him, and to hope to live till the time of his revelation: and they did so, and with a spirit of prophecy, which their own nation did confess and honour, glorified God at the revelation: and the most excellent and devout persons that were conspicuous for their piety did then rejoice in him, and confess him; and the expectation of him at that time was so public and famous, that it gave occasion to divers impostors to abuse the credulity of the people, in pretending to be the Messias; but not only the predictions of the time, and the perfect Synchronisms, did point him out, but at his birth a strange star appeared, which guided certain Levantine princes and sages to the inquiry after him; a strange star, which had an irregular place and an irregular motion, that came by design, and acted by counsel, the counsel of the Almighty Guide, it moved from place to place, till it stood just over the house where the babe did sleep; a star, of which the heathen knew much, who knew nothing of him; a star, which Calcidius affirmed to have signified the descent of God for the salvation of man; a star, that guided the wise Chaldees to worship him with gifts (as the same disciple of Plato does affirm, and) as the holy Scriptures deliver; and this star could be no secret; it troubled all the country; it put Herod upon strange arts of security for his kingdom; it effected a sad tragedy accidentally, for it occasioned the death of all the little babes in the city, and voisinage of Bethlehem: but the birth of this young child, which was thus glorified by a star, was also signified by an angel, and was effected by the holy Spirit of God, in a manner which was in itself supernatural? a virgin was his mother, and God was his father, and his beginning was miraculous; and this matter of his birth of a virgin was proved to an interested and jealous person, even to Joseph, the supposed father of Jesus; it was affirmed publicly by all his family, and by all his disciples, and published in the midst of all his enemies, who by no artifice could reprove it; a matter so famous, that when it was urged as an argument, to prove Jesus to be the Messias, by the force of a prophecy in Isaiah, "A Virgin shall conceive a Son," they who obstinately refused to admit him, did not deny the matter of fact, but denied that it was so meant by the prophet, which, if it were true, can only prove that Jesus was more excellent than was foretold by the prophets, but that there was nothing less in him than was to be in the Messias; it was a matter so famous, that the Arabian physicians, who can affirm no such things of their Mahomet, and yet not being able to deny it to be true of the holy Jesus, endeavour to alleviate and lessen the thing, by saying, It is not wholly beyond the force of nature, that a virgin should conceive; so that it was on all hands undeniable, that the mother of Jesus was a virgin, a mother without a man.

This is that Jesus, at whose presence, before he was born, a babe in his mother's belly also did leap for joy, who was also a person extraordinary himself, conceived in his mother's old age, after a long barrenness, signified by an angel in the temple, to his father officiating his priestly office, who was also struck dumb for his not present believing; all the people saw it, and all his kindred were witnesses of his restitution, and he was named by the angel, and his office declared to be the forerunner of the holy Jesus; and this also was foretold by one of the old prophets; for the whole story of this divine person is a chain of providence and wonder, every link of which is a verification of a prophecy, and all of it is that thing which from Adam to the birth of Jesus, was pointed at and hinted by all the prophets, whose words in him passed perfectly into the event.

This is that Jesus, who, as he was

born without a father, so he was learned without a master: he was a man without age, a doctor in a child's garment, disputing in the sanctuary at twelve years old. He was a sojourner in Egypt, because the poor babe, born of an indigent mother, was a formidable rival to a potent king; and this fear could not come from the design of the infant, but must needs arise from the illustriousness of the birth, and the prophecies of the child, and the sayings of the learned, and the journey of the wise men, and the decrees of God: this journey and the return were both managed by the conduct of an angel and a divine dream, for to the Son of God all the angels did rejoice to minister.

This blessed person, made thus excellent by the Father, and glorious by miraculous consignations, and illustrious by the ministry of heavenly spirits, and proclaimed to Mary and to Joseph by two angels, to the shepherds by a multitude of the heavenly host, to the wise men by a prophecy and by a star, to the Jews by the shepherds, to the Gentiles by the three wise men, to Herod by the doctors of the law, and to himself perfectly known by the inchasing his human nature in the bosom and heart of God, and by the fulness of the Spirit of God, was yet pleased for thirty years together, to live a humble, a laborious, a chaste and a devout, a regular and an even, a wise and an exemplar, a pious and an obscure life, without complaint, without sin, without design of fame, or grandeur of spirit, till the time came that the clefts of the rock were to open, and the diamond give its lustre, and be worn in the diadems of kings, and then this person was wholly admirable: for he was ushered into the world by the voice of a loud crier in the wilderness, a person austere and wise, of a strange life, full of holiness, and full of hardness, and a grest preacher of righteousness, a man believed by all the people that he came from God, one who in his own nation gathered disciples publicly, and (which amongst them was a great matter) he was the doctor of a new institution, and baptized all the country; yet this man, so great, so revered, so followed, so listened to by king and people, by doctors and by idiots, by Pharisees and Sadducees, this man preached Jesus to the people, pointed out the Lamb of God, told that he must increase, and himself from all that fame must retire to give him place; he received him to baptism, after having with duty and modesty declared his own unworthiness to give, but rather a worthiness to receive baptism from the holy hands of Jesus; but at the solemnity God sent down the Holy Spirit upon his holy Son, and by a voice from heaven, a voice of thunder (and God was in that voice) declared that this was his Son, and that he was delighted in him.

This voice from heaven was such, so evident, so certain a conviction of what it did intend to prove, so known and accepted as the way of divine revelation under the second temple, that at that time every man that desired a sign honestly, would have been satisfied with such a voice; it being the testimony, by which God made all extraordinaries to be credible to his people, from the days of Ezra, to the death of the nation; and that there was such a voice, not only then, but divers times after, was as certain, and made as evident, as things of that nature can ordinarily be made. For it being a matter of fact, cannot be supposed infinite, but limited to time and place, heard by a certain number of persons, and was as a clap of thunder upon ordinary accounts, which could be heard but by those who were within the sphere of its own activity; and reported by those to others, who are to give testimony, as testimonies are required, which are credible under the test of two or three disinterested, honest, and true men; and, though this was done in the presence of more, and oftener than once, yet it was a divine testimony but at first, but is to be conveyed by the means of men; and, as God thundered from heaven at the giving of the law (though that he did so, we have notice only from the books of Moses, received from the Jewish nation,) so he did in the days of the Baptist, and so he did to Peter, James, and John, and so he did in the presence of the Pharisees and many of the common people; and, as it is not to be supposed that all these would join their divided interests, for and against themselves, for the verification of a lie; so, if they would have done it, they could not have done it without reproof of their own parties, who would have been glad by the discovery only to disgrace the whole story. But, if the report of honest and just men so reputed, may be questioned for matter of fact, or may not be accounted sufficient to make faith, when there is no pretence of men to the contrary, besides, that we can have no story transmitted to us, no records kept, no acts of courts, no narratives of the days of old, no traditions of our fathers; so there could not be left in nature any usual instrument, whereby God could after the manner of man declare his own will to us, but either we should never know the will of Heaven upon earth, or it must be, that God must not only tell it once but always, and not only always to some men, but always to all men; and then, as there would be no use of history, or the honesty of men, and their faithfulness in telling any act of God in declaration of his will, so there would be perpetual necessity of miracles, and we could not serve God directly with our understanding; for there would be no such thing as faith, that is, of assent without conviction of understanding, and we could not please God with believing, because there would be in it nothing of the will, nothing of love and choice; and that faith which is, would be like that of Thomas, to believe what we see or hear, and God should not at all govern upon earth, unless he did continually come himself; for thus, all government, all teachers, all apostles, all messengers would be needless, because they could not show to the eye what they told to the ears of men; and it might as well be disbelieved in all courts and by all princes, that this was not the letter of a prince, or the act of a man, or the writing of his hand, and so all human intercourse must cease, and all senses, but the eye, be useless as to this affair, or else to the ear all voices must be strangers, but the principal, if, I say, no reports shall make faith. But it is certain, that when these voices were sent from heaven and heard upon earth, they prevailed amongst many that heard them not, and disciples were multiplied upon such accounts; or else it must be that none, that did hear them, could be believed by any of their friends and neighbours; for, if they were, the voice was as effective at the reflex and rebound, as in the direct emission, and could prevail with them that believed their brother or their friend, as certainly as with them that believed their own ears and eyes.

I need not speak of the vast numbers of miracles which he wrought; miracles, which were not more demonstrations of his power, than of his mercy; for they had nothing of pompousness and ostentation, but infinitely of charity and mercy, and that permanent and lasting and often: he opened the eyes of the blind, he made the crooked straight, he made the weak strong, he cured fevers with the touch of his hand, and an issue of blood with the hem of his garment, and sore eyes with the spittle of his mouth, and the clay of the earth; he multiplied the loaves and fishes, he raised the dead to life, a young maiden, the widow's son of Naim, and Lazarus, and cast out devils by the word of his mouth, which he could never do, but by the power of God. For Satan does not cast out Satan, nor a house fight against itself, if it means to stand long; and the devil could not help Jesus, because the holy Jesus taught men virtue, called them from the worshipping devils, taught them to resist the devil, to lay aside all those abominable idolatries by which the devil doth rule in the hearts of men: he taught men to love God, to fly from temptations to sin, to hate and avoid all those things of which the devil is guilty; for Christianity forbids pride, envy, malice, lying, and yet affirms, that the devil is proud, envious, malicious; and the father of lies; and therefore, wherever Christianity prevails, the devil is not worshipped, and therefore he that can think that a man without the power of God could overturn the devil's principles, cross his designs, weaken his strength, baffle him in his policies, befool him and turn him out of possession, and make him open his own mouth against himself, as he did often, and confess himself conquered by Jesus, and tormented, as the oracle did to Augustus Cæsar, and the devil to Jesus himself; he, I say, that thinks a mere man can do this, knows not the weaknesses of a man, nor the power of an angel; but he that thinks this could be done by compact, and by consent of the devil, must think him to be an intelligence, without understanding, a power without force, a fool and a sot to assist a power against himself, and to persecute the power he did assist, to stir up the world to destroy the Christians, whose Master and Lord he did assist to destroy himself; and, when we read that Porphyrius an Heathen, a professed enemy to Christianity, did say, that since Jesus was worshipped, the gods could help no man, that is, the gods which they worshipped; the poor baffled enervated demons: he must either think that the devils are as foolish as they are weak, or else, that they did nothing towards this declination of their power; and therefore that they suffer it by a power higher than themselves, that is, by the power of God in the hand of Jesus.

But, besides that God gave testimony from heaven concerning him, he also gave this testimony of himself to have come from God, because that "he did God's will;" for he that is a good man and lives, by the laws of God and of his nation, a life innocent and simple, prudent and wise, holy and spotless, unreproved and unsuspected, he is certainly by all wise men said in a good sense to be the Son of God; but he who does well and speaks well, and calls all men to glorify and serve God, and serves no ends but of holiness and charity, of wisdom of hearts and reformation of manners, this man carries great authority in his sayings, and ought to prevail with good men in good things, for good ends, which is all that is here required.

But his nature was so sweet, his manners so humble, his words so wise and composed, his comportment so grave and winning, his answers so reasonable, his questions so deep, his reproof so severe and charitable, his pity so great and merciful, his preachings so full of reason and holiness, of weight and authority, his conversation so useful and beneficent, his poverty great but his alms frequent, his family so holy and religious, his and their employment so profitable, his meekness so incomparable, his passions without difference, save only where zeal or pity carried him on to worthy and apt expressions, a person that never laughed, but often wept in a sense of the calamities of others: he loved every man and hated no man; he gave counsel to the doubtful, and instructed the ignorant; he bound up the broken hearts, and strengthened the feeble knees; he relieved the poor, and converted the sinners; he despised none that came to him for relief, and as for those that did not, he went to them; he took all occasions of mercy that were offered him, and went abroad for more; he spent his days in preaching and healing, and his nights in prayers and conversation with God; he was obedient to laws and subject to princes, though he was the Prince of Judea in right of his mother, and of all the world in right of his father; the people followed him, but he made no conventions; and when they were made, he suffered no tumults; when they would have made him a king, he withdrew himself; when he knew they would put him to death, he offered himself; he knew men's hearts, and conversed secretly, and gave answer to their thoughts, and prevented their questions; he would work a miracle rather than give offence, and yet suffer every offence rather than see God his father dishonoured; he exactly kept the law of Moses, to which he came to put a period, and yet chose to signify his purpose only by doing acts of mercy upon their sabbath, doing nothing which they could call a breach of a commandment, but healing sick people, a charity, which themselves would do to beasts, and yet they were angry at him for doing it to their brethren.

In all his life, and in all his conversation with his nation, he was innocent as an angel of light; and when, by the greatness of his worth, and the severity of his doctrine, and the charity of his miracles, and the noises of the people, and his immense fame in all that part of the world, and the multitude of his disciples, and the authority of his sermons, and his free reproof of their hypocrisy, and his discovery of their false doctrines and weak traditions, he had branded the reputations of the vicious rulers of the people, and they resolved to put him to death, they who had the biggest malice in the world, and the weakest accusations, were forced to supply their want of articles against him by making truth to be his fault, and his office to be his crime, and his open confession of what was asked him to be his article of condemnation; and yet after all this they could not persuade the competent judge to condemn him, or to find him guilty of any fault, and therefore they were forced to threaten him with Cæsar's name, against whom then they would pretend him to be an enemy, though in their charge they neither proved, nor indeed laid it against him; and yet to whatsoever they objected he made no return, but his silence and his innocence were remarkable and evident, without labour and reply, and needed no more argument than the sun needs an advocate to prove, that he is the brightest star in the firmament.

Well, so it was, they crucified him; and, when they did, they did as much put out the eye of heaven, as destroy the Son of God: for when with an incomparable sweetness, and a patience exemplar to all ages of sufferers, he endured affronts, examinations, scorns, insolencies of rude ungentle tradesmen, cruel whippings, injurious, unjust, and unreasonable usages from those whom he obliged by all the arts of endearment and offers of the biggest kindness, at last he went to death, as to the work which God appointed him, that he might become the world's sacrifice, and the great example of holiness, and the instance of representing by what way the world was to be made happy (even by sufferings and so entering into heaven :) that he might, I say, become the Saviour of his enemies, and the elder brother to his friends, and the Lord of Glory, and the fountain of its emanation. Then it was, that God gave new testimonies from heaven: the sun was eclipsed all the while he was upon the cross, and yet the moon was in the full; that is, he lost his light, not because any thing in nature did invest him, but because the God of nature (as a Heathen at that very time confessed, who yet saw nothing of this sad iniquity) did suffer. The rocks did rend, the veil of the temple divided of itself and opened the inclosures, and disparked the sanctuary, and made it pervious to the Gentiles' eye; the dead arose, and appeared in Jerusalem to their friends, the Centurion and divers of the people smote their hearts, and were by these strange indications convinced that he was the Son of God. His garments were parted, and lots cast upon his inward coat, they gave him vinegar and gall to drink, they brake not a bone of him, but they pierced his side with a spear, looking upon him whom they had pierced; according to the prophecies of him, which were so clear, and descended to minutes and circumstances of his passion, that there was nothing left by which they could doubt whether this were he or no who was to come into the world: but after all this, that all might be finally verified, and no scruple left, after three days burial, a great stone being rolled to the face of the grave, and the stone sealed, and a guard of soldiers placed about it, he arose from the grave, and for forty days together conversed with his followers and disciples, and beyond all suspicion was seen of five hundred brethren at once, which is a number too great to give their consent and testimony to a lie, and it being so publicly and confidently affirmed at the very time it was done, and for ever after urged by all Christians, used as the most mighty demonstration, proclaimed, preached, talked of, even upbraided to the gainsayers, affirmed by eye-witnesses, persuaded to the kindred and friends, and the relatives and companions of all those five hundred persons who were eye-witnesses, it is infinitely removed from a reasonable suspicion; and at the end of those days was taken up into heaven in the sight of many of them, as Elias was in the presence of Elisha.

Now he, of whom all these things are true, must needs be more than a mere man; and, that they were true, was affirmed by very many eye-witnesses, men, who were innocent, plain men, men that had no bad ends to serve; men, that looked for no preferment by the thing in this life; men, to whom their master told they were to expect not crowns and sceptres, not praise of men or wealthy possessions, not power and ease, but a voluntary casting away care and attendance upon secular affairs, that they might attend their ministry; poverty and prisons, trouble and vexation, persecution and labour, whippings and banishment, bonds and death; and for a reward they must stay till a good day came, but that was not to be at all in this world; and, when the day of restitution and recompense should come, they should never know till it came, but upon the hope of this and the faith of Jesus, and the word of God so taught, so consigned, they must rely wholly and for ever.

Now let it be considered, how could matters of fact be proved better? and how could this be any thing, but such as to rely upon matters of fact? what greater certainty can we have of any thing that was ever done which we saw not, or heard not, but by the report of wise and honest persons? especially, since they were such whose life and breeding was so far from ambition and pompousness, that, as they could not naturally and reasonably hope for any great number of proselytes, so the fame that could be hoped for amongst them, as it must be a matter of their own procuring, and consequently uncertain, so it must needs be very inconsiderable, not fit to outweigh the danger and the loss, nor yet at all valuable by them whose education and pretences were against it? These we have plentifully. But if these men are numerous and united, it is more. Then we have more; for so many did affirm these things which they saw and heard, that thousands of people were convinced of the truth of them: but then, if these men offer their oath, it is yet more, but yet not so much as we have, for they sealed those things with their blood; they gave their life for a testimony; and what reward can any man expect, if he gives his life for a lie? who shall make him recompense, or what can tempt him to do it knowingly? but, after all, it is to be remembered, that as God hates lying, so he hates incredulity; as we must not believe a lie, so neither stop up our eyes and ears against truth; and what we do every minute of our lives in matters of little and of great concernment, if we refuse to do in our religion, which yet is to be conducted as other human affairs are, by human instruments and arguments of persuasion, proper to the nature of the thing, it is an obstinacy, that is as contrary to human reason, as it is to divine faith.

These things relate to the person of the holy Jesus, and prove sufficiently that it was extraordinary, that it was divine, that God was with him, that his power wrought in him; and therefore that it was his will which Jesus taught, and God signed. But then if nothing of all this had been, yet even the doctrine itself proves itself divine, and to come from God.

Bishop Taylor.

§ 141. *Considerations respecting the doctrine of Jesus Christ.*

II. For it is a doctrine perfective of human nature, that teaches us to love God and to love one another, to hurt no man, and to do good to every man; it propines to us the noblest, the highest, and the bravest pleasures of the world; the joys of charity, the rest of innocence, the peace of quiet spirits, the wealth of beneficence, and forbids us only to be beasts and to be devils; it allows all that God and nature intended, and only restrains the excrescencies of nature, and forbids us to take pleasure in that which is the only entertainment of devils, in murders and revenges, malice and spiteful words and actions; it permits corporal pleasures, where they can best minister to health and societies, to conservation of families and honour of communities; it teaches men to keep their words, that themselves may be secured in all their just interests, and to do good to others, that good may be done to them; it forbids biting one another, that we may not be devoured by one another; and commands obedience to superiors, that we may not be ruined in confusion; it combines governments, and confirms all good laws, and makes peace, and opposes and prevents wars where they are not just, and where they are not necessary. It is a religion that is life and spirit, not consisting in ceremonies and external amusements, but in the services of the heart, and the real fruit of lips and hands, that is, of good words and good deeds; it bids us to do that to God which is agreeable to his excellencies, that is, worship him with the best thing we have, and make all things else minister to it; it bids us to do that to our neighbour, by which he may be better: it is the perfection of the natural law, and agreeable to our natural necessities, and promotes our natural ends and designs: it does not destroy reason, but instructs it in very many things, and complies with it in all; it hath in it both heat and light, and is not more effectual than it is beauteous: it promises every thing that we can desire, and yet promises nothing but what it does effect; it proclaims war against all vices, and generally does command every virtue; it teaches us with ease to mortify those affections which reason durst scarce reprove, because she hath not strength enough to conquer; and it doth create in us those virtues which reason of herself never knew, and after they are known, could never approve sufficiently: it is a doctrine, in which nothing is superfluous or burdensome; nor yet is there any thing wanting, which can procure happiness to mankind, or by which God can be glorified: and, if wisdom, and mercy, and justice, and simplicity, and holiness, and purity, and meekness, and contentedness, and charity, be images of God and rays of divinity, then that doctrine, in which all these shine so gloriously, and in which nothing else is ingredient, must needs be from God; and that all this is true in the doctrine of Jesus needs no other probation, but the reading the words.

For, that the words of Jesus are contained in the gospels, that is, in the writings of them, who were eye-witnesses, and ear-witnesses of the actions and sermons of Jesus, is not at all to be doubted; for in every sect we believe their own records of doctrine and institution: for it is madness to suppose the Christians to pretend to be servants of the laws of Jesus, and yet to make a law of their own which he made not: no man doubts but that the Alcoran is the law of Mahomet, that the Old Testament contains the religion of the Jews; and the authority of these books is proved by all the arguments of the religion, for all the arguments persuading to the religion, are intended to prove no other than is contained in those books; and, these having been, for fifteen hundred years and more, received absolutely by all Christian assemblies, if any man shall offer to make a question of their authority, he must declare his reasons, for the disciples of the religion have sufficient presumption, security and possession, till they can be reasonably disturbed; but, that now they can never be, is infinitely certain, because we have a long, immemorial, universal tradition that these books were written in those times, by those men whose names they bear, they were accepted by all churches at the very first notice, except some few of the later, which were first received by some churches, and then consented to by all; they were acknowledged by the same, and by the next age for genuine, their authority published, their words cited, appeals made to them in all questions of religion, because it was known and confessed that they wrote nothing but that they knew, so that they were not deceived; and to say, they would lie, must be made to appear by something extrinsical to this inquiry, and was never so much as plausibly pretended by any adversaries, and it being a matter of another man's will, must be declared by actions, or not at all.

But, besides, the men that wrote them were to be believed, because they did miracles, they wrote prophecies, which are verified by the event, persons were cured at their sepulchres, a thing so famous that it was confessed even by the enemies of the religion: and, after all, that which the world ought to rely upon, is the wisdom and the providence, and the goodness of God; all which it concerned to take care that the religion, which himself so adorned and proved by miracles and mighty signs, should not be lost, nor any false writings be obtruded instead of true, lest, without our fault, the will of God become impossible to be obeyed.

But to return to the thing: all those excellent things, which singly did make famous so many sects of philosophers, and remarked so many princes of their sects, all them united, and many more, which their eyes, *ὄμματα νυκτερίδων*,* dark and dim, could not see, are heaped together in this system of wisdom and holiness. Here are plain precepts full of deepest mystery; here are the measures of holiness and approaches to God described; obedience and conformity, mortification of the body, and elevations of the spirit, abstractions from earth, and arts of society, and union with heaven, degrees of excellencies, and tendencies to perfection, imitations of God, and conversations with him; these are the heights and descents, upon the plain grounds of natural reason, and natural religion; for there is nothing commanded but what our reason by nature ought to choose, and yet nothing of natural reason taught but what is heightened and made more perfect by the Spirit of God; and, when there is any thing in the religion, that is against flesh and blood, it is only when flesh and blood are against us, and against reason, when flesh and blood either would hinder us from great felicity, or bring us into great misery: to conclude, it is such a law, that nothing can hinder men to receive and entertain, but a pertinacious baseness and love to vice, and none can receive it but those who resolve to be good and excellent; and, if the holy Jesus had come into the world with less splendour of power and mighty demonstrations, yet, even the excellency of what he taught, makes him alone fit to be the master of the world.

Bishop Taylor.

§ 142. *Considerations respecting the effect, and the instruments, of Christ's religion.*

III. But then let us consider what this excellent person did effect, and with what instruments he brought so great things to pass. He was to put a period to the rites of Moses, and the religion of the temple, of which the Jews were zealous even unto pertinacity; to reform the manners of all mankind, to confound the wisdom of the Greeks, to break in pieces the power of the devil, to destroy the worship of all false gods, to pull down their oracles, and change their laws, and by principles wise and holy to reform the false discourses of the world.

But see what was to be taught, A trinity in the unity of the Godhead, *τρία ἓν καὶ ἓν τρία*, that is the Christian arithmetic, Three are one, and one are three, so Lucian in his Philopatris, or some other, derides the Christian doctrine; see their Philosophy. Ex nihilo nihil fit. No: Ex nihilo omnia, all things are made of nothing; and a man-god and a god-man, the same person finite, and infinite, born in time, and yet from all eternity the Son of God; but yet born of a woman, and she a maid, but yet a mother; resurrection of the dead, re-union of soul and body; this was part of the Christian physics or their natural philosophy.

But then certainly 'their moral was easy and delicious,' It is so indeed, but not to flesh and blood whose appetites it pretends to regulate or to destroy, to restrain or else to mortify: "fasting and penance, and humility, loving our enemies, restitution of injuries, and self-denial, and taking up the cross, and losing all our goods, and giving our life for Jesus:" as the other was hard to believe, so this is as hard to do.

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* Bats' eyes.

But for whom and under whose conduct was all this to be believed, and all this to be done, and all this to be suffered? Surely, for some glorious and mighty prince, whose splendour as far outshines the Roman empire, as the jewels of Cleopatra outshined the swaddling clothes of the babe at Bethlehem. No, it was not so neither. For all this was for Jesus, whom his followers preached; a poor babe, born in a stable, the son of a carpenter, cradled in a cratch, swaddled in poor clouts; it was for him whom they indeed called a God, but yet whom all the world knew, and they themselves said, was whipped at a post, nailed to a cross; he fell under the malice of the Jews his countrymen, and the power of his Roman lords, a cheap and a pitiful sacrifice, without beauty and without splendour.

The design is great, but does not yet seem possible; but therefore let us see what instruments the Holy Jesus chose, to effect those so mighty changes, to persuade so many propositions, to endure so great sufferings, to overcome so great enemies, to master so many impossibilities which this doctrine and this law from this master were sure to meet withal.

Here, here it is that the Divinity of the power is proclaimed. When a man goes to war, he raises as great an army as he can to out-number his enemy; but, when God fights, three hundred men, that lap like a dog, are sufficient; nay, one word can dissolve the greatest army. He that means to effect any thing must have means of his own proportionable; and if they be not, he must fail, or derive them from the mighty. See then with what instruments the holy Jesus sets upon this great reformation of the world.

Twelve men of obscure and poor birth, of contemptible trades and quality, without learning, without breeding; these men were sent into the midst of a knowing and wise world, to dispute with the most famous philosophers of Greece, to outwit all the learning of Athens, to out-preach all the Roman orators; to introduce into a newly-settled empire, which would be impatient of novelties and change, such a change as must destroy all their temples, or remove thence all their gods: against which change all the zeal of the world, and all the passions, and all the seeming pretences which they could make, must needs be violently opposed: a change that introduced new laws, and caused them to reverse the old, to change that religion under which their fathers long did prosper, and under which the Roman empire obtained so great a grandeur, for a religion, which in appearance was silly and humble, meek and peaceable, not apt indeed to do harm, but exposing men to all the harm in the world, abating their courage, blunting their swords, teaching peace and unactiveness, and making the soldiers arms in a manner useless, and untying their military girdle: a religion which contradicted their reasons of state, and erected new judicatories, and made the Roman courts to be silent and without causes; a religion that gave countenance to the poor and pitiful (but in a time when riches were adored, and ambition esteemed the greatest nobleness, and pleasure thought to be the chiefest good,) it brought no peculiar blessing to the rich or mighty, unless they would become poor and humble in some real sense or other; a religion that would change the face of things, and would also pierce into the secrets of the soul, and unravel all the intrigues of hearts, and reform all evil manners, and break vile habits into gentleness and counsel: that such a religion in such a time, preached by such mean persons, should triumph over the philosophy of the world, and the arguments of the subtle, and the sermons of the eloquent, and the power of princes, and the interest of states, and the inclinations of nature, and the blindness of zeal, and the force of custom, and the pleasures of sin, and the busy arts of the devil, that is, against wit, and power, and money, and religion, and wilfulness, and fame, and empire, which are all the things in the world that can make a thing impossible; this, I say, could not be by the proper force of such instruments; for no man can span heaven with an infant's palm, nor govern wise empires with diagrams.

It were impudence to send a footman to command Cæsar to lay down his arms, to disband his legions, and throw himself into the Tyber, or keep a tavern next to Pompey's theatre; but, if a sober man shall stand alone, unarmed, undefended, or unprovided, and shall tell that he will make the sun stand still, or remove a mountain, or reduce Xerxes's army to the scantling of a single troop, he that believes he will and can do this, must believe he does it by a higher power than he can yet perceive; and so it was in the present transaction. For that the holy Jesus made invisible powers to do him visible honours, that his apostles hunted the demons from their tripods, their navels, their dens, their hollow pipes, their temples, and their altars; that he made the oracles silent, as Lucian, Porphyry, Celsus, and other Heathens confess; that, against the order of new things, which, let them be never so profitable or good, do yet suffer reproach, and cannot prevail unless they commence in a time of advantage and favour; yet, that this should flourish like the palm by pressure, grow glorious by opposition, thrive by persecution, and was demonstrated by objections, argues a higher cause than the immediate instrument. Now how this higher cause did intervene, is visible and notorious: the apostles were not learned, but the holy Jesus promised that he would send down wisdom from above, from the father of spirits; they had no power, but they should be invested with power from on high; they were ignorant and timorous, but he would make them learned and confident, and so he did: he promised that in a few days he would send the Holy Ghost upon them, and he did so; after ten days they felt and saw glorious immission from heaven, lights of moveable fire sitting upon their heads, and that light did illuminate their hearts, and the mighty rushing wind inspired them with a power of speaking divers languages, and brought to their remembrances all that Jesus did and taught, and made them wise to conduct souls, and bold to venture, and prudent to advise, and powerful to do miracles, and witty to convince gainsayers, and hugely instructed in the Scriptures, and gave them the spirit of government, and the spirit of prophecy.

This thing was so public, that at the first notice of it three thousand souls were converted on that very day, at the very time when it was done; for it was certainly a visible demonstration of an invisible power, that ignorant persons, who were never taught, should in an instant speak all the languages of the Roman empire; and indeed this thing was so necessary to be so, and so certain that it was so, so public and so evident, and so reasonable, and so useful, that it is not easy to say whether it was the indication of a greater power, or a greater wisdom; and now the means was proportionable enough to tne biggest end: without learning, they could not confute the learned world; but therefore God became their teacher: without power, they could not break the devil's violence; but therefore God gave them power: without courage, they could not contest against all the violence of the Jews and Gentiles; but therefore God was their strength, and gave them fortitude: without great caution and providence, they could not avoid the traps of crafty persecutors; but therefore God gave them caution, and made them provident, and, as Beseleel, and Aholiab received the spirit of God, the spirit of understanding to enable them to work excellently in the Tabernacle, so had the apostles to make them wise for the work of God and the ministries of this diviner tabernacle, which God pitched, not man.

Immediately upon this, the apostles, to make a fulness of demonstration and an undeniable conviction, gave the spirit to others also, to Jews and Gentiles, and to the men of Samaria, and they spake with tongues and prophesied; then they preached to all nations, and endured all persecutions, and cured all diseases, and raised the dead to life, and were brought before tribunals, and confessed the name of Jesus, and convinced the blasphemous Jews out of their own prophets, and not only prevailed upon women and weak men, but even upon the bravest and wisest. All the disciples of John the Baptist, the Nazarenes and Ebionites, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, Sergius the president, Dionysius an Athenian judge, and Polycarpus, Justinus and Arenæus, Athenagoras and Origen, Tertullian and Clemens of Alexandria, who could not be such fools as, upon a matter not certainly true but probably false, to unravel their former principles, and to change their liberty for a prison, wealth for poverty, honour for disreputation, life for death, if by such exchange they had not been secured of truth and holiness and the will of God.

But, above all these, was Saul, a bold and a witty, a zealous and learned young man, who, going with letters to persecute the Christians of Damascus, was by a light from heaven called from his furious march, reproved by God's angel for persecuting the cause of Jesus, was sent to the city, baptized by a Christian minister, instructed and sent abroad; and he became the prodigy of the world, for learning and zeal, for preaching and writing, for labour and sufferance, for government and wisdom; he was admitted to see the holy Jesus after the Lord was taken into heaven, he was taken up into Paradise, he conversed with angels, he saw unspeakable rays of glory; and besides that himself said it, who had no reason to lie, who would get nothing by it here but a conjugation of troubles, and who would get nothing by it hereafter if it were false; besides this, I say, that he did all those acts of zeal and obedience for the promotion of the religion, does demonstrate he had reason extraordinary for so sudden a change, so strange a labour, so frequent and incomparable sufferings; and therefore, as he did and suffered so much upon such glorious motives, so he spared not to publish it to all the world, he spake it to kings and princes, he told it to the envious Jews; he had partners of his journey, who were witnesses of the miraculous accident; and in his publication he urged the notoriousness of the fact, as a thing not feigned, not private. but done at noon-day under the test of competent persons; and it was a thing that proved itself, for it was effective of a present, a great, and a permanent change.

But now it is no new wonder, but a pursuance of the same conjugation of great and divine things, that the fame and religion of Jesus, was with so incredible a swiftness scattered over the face of the habitable world, from one end of the earth unto the other; it filled all Asia immediately, it passed presently to Europe, and to the farthest Africans; and all the way it went it told nothing but a holy and an humble story, that he who came to bring it into the world, died an ignominious death, and yet this death did not take away their courage, but added much: for they could not fear death for that Master, whom they knew to have for their sakes suffered death, and came to life again. But now infinite numbers of persons of both sexes, and all ages, and all countries, came in to the holy crucifix; and he that was crucified in the reign of Tiberius, was in the time of Nero, even in Rome itself, and in Nero's family by many persons esteemed for a God; and it was upon public record that he was so acknowledged; and this was by a Christian, Justin Martyr, urged to the senate, and to the emperors themselves, who if it had been otherwise could easily have confuted the bold allegation of the Christian, who yet did die for that Jesus who was so speedily reputed for a God; the cross was worn upon breasts, printed in the air, drawn upon foreheads, carried on banners, put upon crowns imperial; and yet the Christians were sought for to punishments, and exquisite punishments sought forth for them; their goods were confiscated, their names odious, prisons were their houses, and so many kinds of tortures invented for them, that Domitius Ulpianus hath spent seven books in describing the variety of tortures the poor Christian was put to at his first appearing; and yet, in despite of all this, and ten thousand other objections and impossibilities, whatsoever was for them made the religion grow, and whatsoever was against them made it grow; if they had peace, the religion was prosperous; if they had persecution, it was still prosperous; if princes favoured them the world came in, because the Christians lived holily; if princes were incensed, the world came in, because the Christians died bravely. They sought for death with greediness, they desired to be grinded in the teeth of lions; and with joy they beheld the wheels and the bended trees, the racks and the gibbets, the fires and the burning irons, which were like the chair of Elias to them, instruments to carry them to heaven, into the bosom of their beloved Jesus.

Who would not acknowledge the divinity of this person, and the excellency of this institution, that should see infants to weary the hands of hangmen for the testimony of Jesus; and wise men preach this doctrine for no other visible reward, but shame and death, poverty and banishment? and hangmen converted by the blood of martyrs, springing upon their faces, which their impious hands and cords have strained through their flesh? Who would not have confessed the honour of Jesus, when he should see miracles done at the tombs of martyrs, and devils tremble at the mention of the name of Jesus, and the world running to the honour of the poor Nazarine, and kings and queens kissing the feet of the poor servants of Jesus? Could a Jew fisherman and a publican effect all this, for the son of a poor maiden of Judea? can we suppose all the world, or so great a part of mankind, can consent by chance, or suffer such changes for nothing? or for any thing less than this? The son of the poor maiden was the Son of God: and the fishermen spake by a divine spirit; and they catched the world with holiness and miracles, with wisdom and power bigger than the strength of all the Roman legions.

And what can be added to all this, but this thing alone to prove the divinity of Jesus? He is a God, or at least is taught by God, who can foretel future contingencies; and so did the holy Jesus, and so did his disciples.

Our blessed Lord, while he was alive, foretold that after his death his religion should flourish more than when he was alive: he foretold persecutions to his disciples; he foretold the mission of the Holy Ghost to be in a very few days after his ascension, which within ten days came to pass; he prophesied that the fact of Mary Magdalene, in anointing the head and feet of her Lord, should be public and known as the gospel itself, and spoken of in the same place; he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the signs of its approach, and that it should be by war, and particularly after the manner of prophets, symbolically, named the nation should do it, pointing out the Roman eagles; he foretold his death, and the manner of it, and plainly before-hand published his resurrection, and told them it should be the sign to that generation, viz. the great argument to prove him to be the Christ; he prophesied that there should arise false Christs after him, and it came to pass to the extreme great calamity of the nation; and lastly, he foretold that his beloved disciple St. John should tarry upon the earth till his coming again, that is, to his coming to judgment upon Jerusalem; and that his religion should be preached to the Gentiles, that it should be scattered over all the world, and be received by all nations; that it should stay upon the face of the earth till his last coming to judge all the world, and that "the gates of hell should not be able to prevail against his church;" which prophecy is made good thus long, till this day, and is as a continual argument to justify the divinity of the author: the continuance of the religion helps to continue it, for it proves that it came from God, who foretold that it should continue; and therefore it must continue, because it came from God; and therefore it came from God, because it does and shall for ever continue according to the word of the holy Jesus.

But, after our blessed Lord was entered into glory, the disciples also were prophets. Agabus foretold the dearth that it was to be in the Roman empire in the days of Claudius Cæsar, and that St. Paul should be bound at Jerusalem: St. Paul foretold the entering-in of Heretics into Asia after his departure; and he and St. Peter and St. Jude, and generally the rest of the apostles, had two great predictions, which they used not only as a verification of the doctrine of Jesus, but as a means to strengthen the hearts of the disciples, who were so broken with persecution; the one was, that there should arise a sect of vile men, who should be enemies to religion and government, and cause a great apostacy, which happened notoriously in the sect of the Gnostics, which those three apostles and St. John notoriously and plainly do describe: and the other was, that although the Jewish nation did mightily oppose the religion, it should be but for a while, for they should be destroyed in a short time, and their nation made extremely miserable; but, for the Christians, if they would fly from Jerusalem and go to Pella, there should not a hair of their head perish: the verification of this prophecy the Christians extremely longed for, and wondered it stayed so long, and began to be troubled at the delay, and suspected all was not well, when the great proof of their religion was not verified; and, while they were in thoughts of heart concerning it, the sad catalysis did come, and swept away eleven hundred thousand of the nation; and from that day forward the nation was broken in pieces with intolerable calamities: they are scattered over the face of the earth, and are a vagabond nation, but yet, like oil in a vessel of wine, broken into bubbles but kept in their own circles; and they shall never be an united people, till they are servants of the holy Jesus; but shall remain without priest or temple, without altar or sacrifice, without city or country, without the land of promise, or the promise of a blessing, till our Jesus is their high Priest, and their Shepherd to gather them into his fold: and this very thing is a mighty demonstration against the Jews by their own prophets; for when Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Malachi, had prophesied the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, and the change of the old law, and the introduction of a new by the Messias; that this was he, was therefore certain, because he taught the world a new law, and presently after the publication of this, the old was abrogate, and not only went into desuetude, but into a total abolition among all the world; and for those of the remnant of the scattered Jews who obstinately blaspheme, the law is become impossible to them, and they placed in such circumstances, that they need not dispute concerning its obligation; for it being external and corporal, ritual, and at last made also local, when the circumstances are impossible, the law, that was wholly ceremonial and circumstantial, must needs pass away: and when they have lost their priesthood, they cannot retain the law, as no man takes care to have his beard shaved, when his head is off.

And it is a wonder to consider how the anger of God is gone out upon that miserable people, and that so great a blindness is fallen upon them; it being evident and notorious that the Old Testament was nothing but a shadow and umbrage of the New; that the prophecies of that are plainly verified in this; that all the predictions of the Messias are most undeniably accomplished in the person of Jesus Christ, so that they cannot with any plausibleness or colour be turned any other way, and be applied to any other person, although the Jews make illiterate allegations, and prodigious dreams, by which they have fooled themselves for sixteen hundred years together, and still hope without reason, and are confident without revelation, and pursue a shadow while they quit the glorious body; while in the mean time, the Christian prays for his conversion, and is at rest in the truth of Jesus, and hath certain inexpressible confidences and internal lights, clarities of the Holy Spirit of God, and loves to the holy Jesus produced in his soul that he will die when he cannot dispute, and is satisfied and he knows not how, and is sure by comforts, and comforted by the excellency of his belief, which speaks nothing but holiness, and light, and reason, and peace, and satisfactions infinite, because he is sure that all the world can be happy if they would live by the religion of Jesus, and that neither societies of men nor single persons can have felicity but by this; and that therefore God, who so decrees to make men happy, hath also decreed that it shall for ever be upon the face of the earth, till the earth itself shall be no more. Amen.

Bishop Taylor.

§ 143. *Considerations on the weak Pretences of other Religions.*

IV. Now, if against this vast heap of things any man shall but confront the pretences of any other religion, and see how they fail both of reason and holiness, of wonder and divinity, how they enter by force, and are kept up by human interests, how ignorant and unholy, how unlearned and pitiful are their pretences; the darknesses of these must add great eminency to the brightness of that.

For the Jews' religion which came from heaven, is therefore not now to be practised, because it did come from heaven, and was to expire into the Christian, it being nothing but the image of this perfection: and the Jews needed no other argument but this, that God hath made this impossible now to be done; for he that ties to ceremonies and outward usages, temples and altars, sacrifices and priests, troublesome and expensive rites and figures of future signification, means that there should be an abode and fixed dwelling, for these are not to be done by an ambulatory people; and therefore since God hath scattered the people into atoms and crumbs of society, without temple or priest, without sacrifice or altar, without Urim or Thummim, without prophet or vision, even communicating with them no way but by ordinary providence, it is but too evident, that God hath nothing to do with them in the matter of that religion; but that it is expired, and no way obligatory to them or pleasing to him, which is become impossible to be acted: whereas, the Christian religion is as eternal as the soul of a man, and can no more cease than our spirits can die, and can worship upon mountains and in caves, in fields and churches, in peace and war, in solitude and society, in persecution and in sun-shine, by night and by day, and be solemnized by clergy, and laity in the essential parts of it, and is the perfection of the soul, and the highest reason of man, and the glorification of God.

But for the Heathen religions, it is evidently to be seen, that they are nothing but an abuse of the natural inclination which all men have to worship a God, whom because they know not they guess at in the dark; for that they know there is and ought to be something that hath the care and providence of their affairs. But the body of their religion is nothing but little arts of governments, and stratagems of princes, and devices to secure the government of new usurpers, or to make obedience to the laws sure, by being sacred, and to make the yoke, that was not natural, pleasant by something that is. But yet for the whole body of it, who sees not that their worshippings could not be sacred, because they were done by something that is impure? They appeased their gods with adulteries and impure mixtures, by such things which Cato was ashamed to see, by gluttonous eatings of flesh, and impious drinkings, and they did *litare in humano sanguine*, they sacrificed men and women and children to their demons, as is notorious in the rites of Bacchus Omesta amongst the Greeks, and of Jupiter, to whom a Greek and a Greekess, a Galatian and a Galatess were yearly offered; in the answers of the oracles to Calchas, as appears in Homer and Virgil. Who sees not, that crimes were warranted by the example of their immortal gods; and that what did dishonour themselves, they sang to the honour of their gods, whom they affirmed to be passionate and proud, jealous and revengeful, amorous and lustful, fearful and impatient, drunken and sleepy, weary and wounded? that the religions were made lasting by policy and force, by ignorance, and the force of custom; by the preferring an inveterate error, and loving of a quiet and prosperous evil; by the arguments of pleasure, and the correspondencies of sensuality; by the fraud of oracles, and the patronage of vices; and because they feared every change as an earthquake, as supposing overturnings of their old error to be the eversion of their well-established governments? And it had been ordinarily impossible that ever Christianity should have entered, if the nature and excellency of it had not been such as to enter like rain into a fleece of wool, or the sun into a window without noise or violence, without emotion and disordering the political constitution, without causing trouble to any man, but what his own ignorance or peevishness was pleased to spin out of his own bowels; but did establish governments, secure obedience, make the laws firm, and the persons of princes to be sacred; it did not oppose force by force, nor strike princes for justice; it defended itself against enemies by patience, and overcame them by kindness; it was the great instrument of God to demonstrate his power in our weaknesses, and to do good to mankind by the imitation of his excellent goodness.

Lastly, he that considers concerning the religion and person of Mahomet: that he was a vicious person, lustful and tyrannical; that he propounded incredible and ridiculous propositions to his disciples; that it entered by the sword, by blood and violence, by murder and robbery; that it propounds sensual rewards, and allures to compliance by bribing our basest lusts; that it conserves itself by the same means it entered: that it is unlearned and foolish, against reason, and the discourses of all wise men; that it did no miracles, and made false prophecies; in short, that in the person that founded it, in the article it persuades, in the manner of prevailing, in the reward it offers, it is unholy and foolish and rude: it must needs appear to be void of all pretence; and that no man of reason can ever be fairly persuaded by arguments, that it is the daughter of God, and came down from heaven.

Bishop Taylor.

§ 144. *To the Sceptics and Infidels of the Age.*

Gentlemen,

Suppose the mighty work accomplished, the cross trampled upon, Christianity every where proscribed, and the religion of nature once more become the religion of Europe; what advantage will you have derived to your country, or to yourselves, from the exchange? I know your answer—you will have freed the world from the hypocrisy of priests, and the tyranny of superstition.—No; you forget that Lycurgus, and Numa, and Odin, and Manco-Copac, and all the great legislators of ancient or modern story, have been of opinion, that the affairs of civil society could not well be conducted without some religion; you must of necessity introduce a priesthood, with, probably, as much hypocrisy; a religion, with, assuredly, more superstition, than that which you now reprobate with such indecent and ill-grounded contempt. But I will tell you, from what you will have freed the world; you will have freed it from its abhorrence of vice, and from every powerful incentive to virtue; you will, with the religion, have brought back the depraved morality of Paganism; you will have robbed mankind of their firm assurance of another life; and thereby you will have despoiled them of their patience, of their humility, of their charity, of their chastity, of all those mild and silent virtues, which (however despicable they may appear in your eyes) are the only ones which meliorate and sublime our nature; which Paganism never knew, which spring from Christianity alone, which do or might constitute our comfort in this life, and without the possession of which, another life, if after all there should happen to be one, must be more vicious and more miserable than this is, unless a miracle be exerted in the alteration of our disposition.

Perhaps you will contend, that the universal light of reason, that the truth and fitness of things, are of themselves sufficient to exalt the nature, and regulate the manners of mankind. Shall we never have done with this groundless commendation of natural law? Look into the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, and you will see the extent of its influence over the Gentiles of those days, or if you dislike Paul's authority, and the manners of antiquity; look into the more admired accounts of modern voyagers; and examine its influence over the Pagans of our own times, over the sensual inhabitants of Otaheite, over the cannibals of New Zealand, or the remorseless savages of America. But these men are Barbarians.—Your law of nature, notwithstanding, extends even to them:—but they have misused their reason;—they have then the more need of, and would be the more thankful for that revelation, which you, with an ignorant and fastidious self-sufficiency deem useless. —But, they might of themselves, if they thought fit, become wise and virtuous.—I answer with Cicero, "Ut nihil interest, utrum nemo valeat, an nemo valere possit; sic non intelligo quid intersit, utrum nemo sit sapiens, an nemo esse possit."

These, however, you will think, are extraordinary instances; and that we ought not from these, to take our measure of the excellency of the law of nature; but rather from the civilized states of China and Japan, or from the nations which flourished in learning and in arts, before Christianity was heard of in the world. You mean to say, that by the law of nature, which you are desirous of substituting in the room of the gospel, you do not understand those rules of conduct, which an individual, abstracted from the community, and deprived of the institution of mankind, could excogitate for himself; but such a system of precepts, as the most enlightened men of the most enlightened ages have recommended to our observance. Where do you find this system? We cannot meet with it in the works of Stobæus or the Scythian Anacharsis; nor in those of Plato, or of Cicero, nor in those of the emperor Antoninus, or the slave Epictetus; for we are persuaded, that the most animated considerations of the πϱεπον, and the *honestum*, of the beauty and virtue, and the fitness of things, are not able to furnish, even a Brutus himself, with permanent principles of action; much less are they able to purify the pollutad recesses of a vitiated heart, to curb the irregularities of appetite, or restrain the impetuosity of passion in common men. If you order us to examine the works of Grotius, or Puffendorf, of Burlamaqui, or Hutchinson, for what you understand by the law of nature; we apprehend that you are in a great error, in taking your notions of natural law, as discoverable by natural reason, from the elegant systems of it, which have been drawn up by Christian philosophers; since they have all laid their foundations, either tacitly or expressly, upon a principle derived from revelation. A thorough knowledge of the being and attributes of God: and even those amongst yourselves, who, rejecting Christianity, still continue Theists, are indebted to revelation (whether you are either aware of, or disposed to acknowledge the debt, or not) for those sublime speculations concerning the deity, which you have fondly attributed to the excellency of your own unassisted reason. If you would know the real strength of natural reason, and how far it can proceed in the investigation or enforcement of moral duties, you must consult the manners and the writings of those, who have never heard of either the Jewish or the Christian dispensation, or of those other manifestations of himself, which God vouchsafed to Adam and to the patriarchs, before and after the flood. It would be difficult, perhaps, any where, to find a people entirely destitute of traditionary notices concerning a deity, and of traditionary fears or expectations of another life; and the morals of mankind may have, perhaps, been no where quite so abandoned, as they would have been, had they been left wholly to themselves in these points: however, it is a truth, which cannot be denied, how much soever it may be lamented, that though the generality of mankind have always had some faint conceptions of God, and his providence; yet they have been always greatly inefficacious in the production of good morality, and highly derogatory to his nature, amongst all the people of the earth, except the Jews and Christians; and some may perhaps be desirous of excepting the Mahometans, who derive all that is good in their Koran from Christianity.

The laws concerning justice, and the reparation of damages, concerning the security of property, and the performance of contracts; concerning, in short, whatever affects the well-being of civil society, have been every where understood with sufficient precision; and if you choose to style Justinian's code, a code of natural law, though you will err against propriety of speech, yet you are so far in the right, that natural reason discovered, and the depravity of human nature compelled human kind, to establish by proper sanctions the laws therein contained; and you will have moreover Carneades, no mean philosopher, on your side; who knew of no law of nature, different from that which men had instituted for their common utility; and which was various according to the manners of men in different climates, and changeable with a change of times in the same. And in truth in all countries where Paganism has been the established religion, though a philosopher may now and then have stepped beyond the paltry prescript of civil jurisprudence, in his pursuit of virtue; yet the bulk of mankind have ever been contented with that scanty pittance of morality, which enabled them to escape the lash of civil punishment; I call it a scanty pittance; because a man may be intemperate, iniquitous, impious, a thousand ways a profligate and a villain, and yet elude the cognizance, and avoid the punishment of civil laws.

I am sensible, you will be ready to say, What is all this to the purpose? though the bulk of mankind may never be able to investigate the laws of natural religion, nor disposed to reverence their sanctions when investigated by others, nor solicitous about any other standard of moral rectitude, than civil legislation; yet the inconveniencies which may attend the extirpation of Christianity, can be no proof of its truth.—I have not produced them, as a proof of its truth; but they are a strong and conclusive proof, if not of its truth, at least of its utility; and the consideration of its utility, may be a motive to yourselves for examining, whether it may not chance to be true; and it ought to be a reason with every good citizen, and with every man of sound judgment, to keep his opinions to himself, if from any particular circumstances in his studies or in his education he should have the misfortune to think that it is not true. If you can discover to the rising generation, a better religion than the Christian, one that will more effectually animate their hopes, and subdue their passions, make them better men, or better members of society, we importune you to publish it for their advantage; but till you can do that, we beg of you, not to give the reins to their passions, by instilling into their unsuspicious minds your pernicious prejudices: even now men scruple not, by their lawless lust, to ruin the repose of private families, and to fix a stain of infamy on the noblest: even now, they hesitate not, in lifting up a murderous arm against the life of their friend, or against their own, as often as the fever of intemperance stimulates their resentment, or the satiety of an useless life excites their despondency: even now, whilst we are persuaded of a resurrection from the dead, and of a judgment to come, we find it difficult enough to resist the solicitations of sense, and to escape unspotted from the licentious manners of the world. But what will become of our virtue, what of the consequent peace and happiness of society, if you persuade us, that there are no such things? in two words,—you may ruin yourselves by your attempt, and you will certainly ruin your country by your success.

But the consideration of the inutility of your design is not the only one which should induce you to abandon it; the argument *a tuto* ought to be warily managed, or it may tend to the silencing our opposition to any system of superstition, which has had the good fortune to be sanctioned by public authority; it is, indeed, liable to no objection in the present case; we do not, however, wholly rely upon its cogency. It is not contended that Christianity is to be received, merely because it is useful: but because it is true. This you deny, and think your objections well grounded; we conceive them originating in your vanity, your immorality, or your misapprehension. There are many worthless doctrines, and many superstitious observances, which the fraud or folly of mankind have every where annexed to Christianity, (especially in the church of Rome,) as essential parts of it; if you take these sorry appendages to Christianity, for Christianity itself, as preached by Christ, and by the apostles; if you confound the Roman with the Christian religion, you quite misapprehend its nature; and are in a state similar to that of men, (mentioned by Plutarch, in his treatise of superstition,) who flying from superstition, leaped over religion, and sunk into downright atheism.—Christianity is not a religion very palateable to a voluptuous age; it will not conform its precepts to the standard of fashion; it will not lessen the deformity of vice by lenient appellations; but calls keeping, whoredom; intrigue, adultery; and duelling, murder; it will not pander the lust, it will not license the intemperance of mankind; it is a troublesome monitor to a man of pleasure; and your way of life may have made you quarrel with your religion.—As to your vanity, as a cause of your infidelity, suffer me to produce the sentiments of Mr. Bayle upon that head; if the description does not suit your character, you will not be offended at it; and if you are offended with its freedom, it will do you good: 'This inclines me to believe, that libertines, like Des-Barreaux, are not greatly persuaded of the truth of what they say. They have made no deep examination, they have learned some few objections, which they are perpetually making a noise with; they speak from a principle of ostentation, and give themselves the lie in the time of danger.—Vanity has a greater share in their disputes, than conscience; they imagine that the singularity and boldness of the opinions which they maintain, will give them the reputation of men of parts:—by degrees, they get a habit of holding impious discourses; and if their vanity be accompanied by a voluptuous life, their progress in that road is the swifter.'

The main stress of your objections, rests not upon the insufficiency of the external evidence to the truth of Christianity; for few of you, though you may become the future ornaments of the senate, or of the bar, have ever employed an hour in its examination; but it rests upon the difficulty of the doctrines contained in the New Testament: they exceed, you say, your comprehension; and you felicitate yourselves, that you are not yet arrived at the true standard of orthodox faith,—*credo quia impossibile.* You think, it would be taking a superfluous trouble, to inquire into the nature of the external proofs, by which Christianity is established; since, in your opinion, the book itself carries with it its own refutation. A gentleman as acute, probably, as any of you; and who once believed, perhaps, as little as any of you, has drawn a quite different conclusion from the perusal of the New Testament; his book (however exceptionable it may be thought in some particular parts) exhibits, not only a distinguished triumph of reason over prejudice, of Christianity over deism; but it exhibits, what is infinitely more rare, the character of a man, who has had courage and candour enough to acknowledge it.

But what if there should be some incomprehensible doctrines in the Christian religion; some circumstances, which in their causes, or their consequences, surpass the reach of human reason; are they to be rejected upon that account? You are, or would be thought men of reading, and knowledge, and enlarged understandings; weigh the matter fairly; and consider whether revealed religion be not, in this respect, just upon the same footing, with every other object of your contemplation. Even in mathematics, the science of demonstration itself, though you get over its first principles, and learn to digest the idea of a point without parts, a line without breadth, and a surface without thickness; yet you will find yourselves at a loss to comprehend the perpetual approximation of lines, which can never meet; the doctrine of incommensurables, and of an infinity of infinities, each infinitely greater, or infinitely less, not only than any finite quantity, but than each other. In physics, you cannot comprehend the primary cause of any thing; not of the light, by which you see; nor of the elasticity of the air, by which you hear; nor of the fire by which you are warmed. In physiology, you cannot tell, what first gave motion to the heart; nor what continues it; nor why its motion is less voluntary, than that of the lungs; nor why you are able to move your arm, to the right or left, by a simple volition: you cannot explain the cause of animal heat; nor comprehend the principle, by which your body was at first formed, nor by which it is sustained, nor by which it will be reduced to earth. In natural religion, you cannot comprehend the eternity or omnipresence of the Deity; nor easily understand, how his prescience can be consistent with your freedom, or his immutability with his government of moral agents; nor why he did not make all his creatures equally perfect; nor why he did not create them sooner: in short, you cannot look into any branch of knowledge, but you will meet with subjects above your comprehension. The fall and the redemption of human kind are not more incomprehensible, than the creation and the conservation of the universe; the infinite author of the works of providence, and of nature, is equally inscrutable, equally past our finding out in them both. And it is somewhat remarkable, that the deepest inquirers into nature, have ever thought with most reverence, and spoken with most confidence, concerning those things, which in revealed religion, may seem hard to be understood; they have ever avoided that self-sufficiency of knowledge, which springs from ignorance, produces indifference, and ends in infidelity.

Plato mentions a set of men, who were very ignorant, and thought themselves supremely wise; and who rejected the argument for the being of a God, derived from the harmony and order of the universe, as old and trite; there have been men, it seems, in all ages, who, in affecting singularity, have overlooked truth; an argument, however, is not the worse for being old; and surely it would have been a more just mode of reasoning, if you had examined the external evidence for the truth of Christianity, weighed the old arguments from miracles, and from prophecies, before you had rejected the whole account from the difficulties you met with in it. You would laugh at an Indian, who in peeping into a history of England, and meeting with the mention of the Thames being frozen, or of a shower of hail, or of snow, should throw the book aside, as unworthy of his farther notice, from his want of ability to comprehend these phenomena.

In considering the argument from miracles, you will soon be convinced, that it is possible for God to work miracles; and you will be convinced, that it is as possible for human testimony to establish the truth of miraculous, as of physical or historical events; but before you can be convinced that the miracles in question are supported by such testimony as deserves to be credited, you must inquire at what period, and by what persons, the books of the Old and New Testament were composed; if you reject the account without making this examination, you reject it from prejudice, not from reason.

There is, however, a short method of examining this argument, which may, perhaps, make as great an impression on your minds, as any other. Three men of distinguished abilities rose up at different times, and attacked Christianity with every objection which their malice could suggest, or their learning could devise; but neither Celsus in the second century, nor Porphyry in the third, nor the emperor Julian himself in the fourth century, ever questioned the reality of the miracles related in the gospels. Do but you grant us what these men (who were more likely to know the truth of the matter, than you can be) granted to their adversaries, and we will very readily let you make the most of the magic to which, as the last wretched shift, they were forced to attribute them. We can find you men, in our days, who from the mixture of two colourless liquors, will produce you a third as red as blood, or of any other colour you desire; *et dicto citius*, by a drop resembling water, will restore the transparency; they will make two fluids coalesce into a solid body; and from the mixture of liquors colder than ice, will instantly raise you a horrid explosion, and a tremendous flame: these, and twenty other tricks they will perform, without having been sent with our Saviour to Egypt to learn magic; nay, with a bottle or two of oil, they will compose the undulations of a lake; and by a little art, they will restore the functions of life to a man, who has been an hour or two under water, or a day or two buried in the snow: but in vain will these men, or the greatest magician that Egypt ever saw, say to a boisterous sea, "Peace, be still;" in vain will they say to a carcass rotting in the grave, "Come forth;" the winds and the sea will not obey them, and the putrid carcass will not hear them. You need not suffer yourselves to be deprived of the weight of this argument, from its having been observed, that the Fathers have acknowledged the supernatural part of Paganism; since the Fathers were in no condition to detect a cheat, which was supported both by the disposition of the people, and the power of the civil magistrate; and they were, from that inability, forced to attribute to infernal agency what was too cunningly contrived to be detected, and contrived for too impious a purpose, to be credited as the word of God.

With respect to prophecy, you may, perhaps, have accustomed yourselves to consider it, as originating in Asiatic enthusiasm, in Chaldean mystery, or in the subtle stratagem of interested priests: and have given yourselves no more trouble concerning the predictions of sacred, than concerning the oracles of Pagan history. Or, if ever you have cast a glance upon this subject, the dissensions of learned men concerning the proper interpretation of the revelation, and other difficult prophecies, may have made you rashly conclude, that all prophecies were equally unintelligible; and more indebted for their accomplishment, to a fortunate concurrence of events, and the pliant ingenuity of the expositor, than to the inspired foresight of the prophet. In all that the prophets of the Old Testament have delivered, concerning the destruction of particular cities, and the desolation of particular kingdoms, you may see nothing but shrewd conjectures, which any one acquainted with the history of the rise and fall of empires, might certainly have made: and as you would not hold him for a prophet, who should now affirm, that London or Paris would afford to future ages, a spectacle just as melancholy, as that which we now contemplate, with a sigh, in the ruins of Agrigentum or Palmyra; so you cannot persuade yourselves to believe, that the denunciations of the prophets against the haughty cities of Tyre or Babylon, for instance, proceeded from the inspiration of the Deity. There is no doubt, that by some such general kind of reasoning, many are influenced to pay no attention to an argument, which, if properly considered, carries with it the strongest conviction.

Spinoza said, That he would have broken his atheistic system to pieces, and embraced without repugnance the ordinary faith of Christians, if he could have persuaded himself of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead; and I question not, that there are many disbelievers, who would relinquish their deistic tenets, and receive the gospel, if they could persuade themselves, that God had ever so far interfered in the moral government of the world, as to illumine the mind of any one man with the knowledge of future events. A miracle strikes the senses of the persons who see it, a prophecy addresses itself to the understandings of those who behold its completion; and it requires, in many cases, some learning, in all some attention, to judge of the correspondence of events with the predictions concerning them. No one can be convinced, that what Jeremiah and the other prophets foretold of the fate of Babylon, that it should be besieged by the Medes; that it should be taken, when her mighty men were drunken, when her springs were dried up; and that it should become a pool of water, and should remain desolate for ever; no one, I say, can be convinced, that all these, and other parts of the prophetic denunciation, have been minutely fulfilled, without spending some time in reading the accounts, which profane historians have delivered down to us concerning its being taken by Cyrus;

and which modern travellers have given us of its present situation.

Porphyry was so persuaded of the coincidence between the prophecies of Daniel and the events, that he was forced to affirm the prophecies were written after the things prophesied of had happened; another Porphyry has, in our days, been so astonished at the correspondence between the prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, as related by St. Matthew, and the history of that event, as recorded by Josephus; that, rather than embrace Christianity, he has ventured to assert (contrary to the faith of all ecclesiastical history, the opinion of the learned of all ages, and all the rules of good criticism) that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel after Jerusalem had been taken and destroyed by the Romans. You may from these instances perceive the strength of the argument from prophecy; it has not been able indeed to vanquish the prejudices of either the ancient or the modern Porphyry; but it has been able to compel them both, to be guilty of obvious falsehoods, which have nothing but impudent assertions to support them.

Some over-zealous interpreters of Scripture have found prophecies in simple narrations, extended real predictions beyond the times and circumstances to which they naturally were applied, and perplexed their readers with a thousand quaint allusions and allegorical conceits; this proceeding has made unthinking men pay less regard to prophecy in general; there are some predictions however, such as those concerning the present state of the Jewish people, and the corruption of Christianity, which are now fulfilling in the world; and which, if you will take the trouble to examine them, you will find of such an extraordinary nature, that you will not perhaps hesitate to refer them to God as their author; and if you once become persuaded of the truth of any one miracle, or of the completion of any one prophecy, you will resolve all your difficulties (concerning the manner of God's interposition, in the moral government of our species, and the nature of the doctrines contained in revelation) into your own inability fully to comprehend the whole scheme of divine providence.

We are told, however, that the strangeness of the narration, and the difficulty of the doctrines contained in the New Testament, are not the only circumstances which induce you to reject it; you have discovered, you think, so many contradictions, in the accounts which the Evangelists have given of the life of Christ, that you are compelled to consider the whole as an ill-digested and improbable story. You would not reason thus upon any other occasion; you would not reject as fabulous the accounts given by Livy and Polybius of Hannibal and the Carthaginians, though you should discover a difference betwixt them in several points of little importance. You cannot compare the history of the same events as delivered by any two historians, but you will meet with many circumstances, which, though mentioned by one, are either wholly omitted or differently related by the other; and this observation is peculiarly applicable to biographical writings: but no one ever thought of disbelieving the leading circumstances of the lives of Vitellius or Vespasian, because Tacitus and Suetonius did not in every thing correspond in their accounts of these emperors; and if the memoirs of the life and doctrines of M. de Voltaire himself, were some twenty or thirty years after his death, to be delivered to the world by four of his most intimate acquaintance; I do not apprehend that we should discredit the whole account of such an extraordinary man, by reason of some slight inconsistencies, and contradictions, which the avowed enemies of his name might chance to discover in the several narrations. Though we should grant you then, that the Evangelists had fallen into some trivial contradictions, in what they have related concerning the life of Christ; yet you ought not to draw any other inference from our concession, than that they had not plotted together, as cheats would have done, in order to give an unexceptionable consistency to their fraud. We are not, however, disposed to make you any such concession: we will rather show you the futility of your general argument, by touching upon a few of the places which you think are most liable to your censure.

You observe, that neither Luke, nor Mark, nor John, have mentioned the cruelty of Herod in murdering the infants of Bethlehem; and that no account is to be found of this matter in Josephus, who wrote the life of Herod; and therefore the fact recorded by Matthew is not true.—The concurrent testimony of many independent writers concerning a matter of fact, unquestionably adds to its probability; but if nothing is to be received as true, upon the testimony of a single author, we must give up some of the best writers, and disbelieve some of the most interesting facts of ancient history.

According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, there was only an interval of three months, you say, between the baptism and crucifixion of Jesus; from which time, taking away the forty days of temptation, there will only remain about six weeks for the whole period of his public ministry; which lasted, however, according to St. John, at the least, above three years.—Your objection fairly stated stands thus; Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in writing the history of Jesus Christ, mention the several events of his life, as following one another in continued succession, without taking notice of the times in which they happened; but is it a just conclusion from their silence, to infer that there really were no intervals of time between the transactions which they seem to have connected? Many instances might be produced from the most admired biographers of antiquity, in which the events are related, as immediately consequent to each other, which did not happen but at very distant periods: we have an obvious example of this manner of writing in St. Matthew; who connects the preaching of John the Baptist with the return of Joseph from Egypt, though we are certain that the latter event preceded the former by a great many years.

John has said nothing of the institution of the Lord's supper; the other Evangelists have said nothing of the washing of the disciples' feet:—what then? are you not ashamed to produce these facts as instances of contradiction? If omissions are contradictions, look into the history of the age of Lewis the fourteenth, or into the general history of M. de Voltaire, and you will meet with a great abundance of contradictions.

John, in mentioning the discourse which Jesus had with his mother and his beloved disciple, at the time of his crucifixion, says, that she, with Mary Magdalene, stood near the cross; Matthew, on the other hand, says, that Mary Magdalene and the other women were there, beholding afar off: this you think a manifest contradiction; and scoffingly inquire whether the women and the beloved disciple, which were near the cross, could be the same with those who stood far from the cross?—It is difficult not to transgress the bounds of moderation and good manners, in answering such sophistry; what! have you to learn, that though the Evangelists speak of the crucifixion, as of one event, it was not accomplished in one instant, but lasted several hours? And why the women, who were at a distance from the cross, might not, during its continuance, draw near the cross; or from being near the cross might not move from the cross, is more than you can explain to either us, or yourselves. And we take from you your only refuge, by denying expressly, that the different Evangelists, in their mention of the women, speak of the same point of time.

The Evangelists, you affirm, are fallen into gross contradictions, in their accounts of the appearances, by which Jesus manifested himself to his disciples, after his resurrection from the dead; for Matthew speaks of two, Mark of three, Luke of two, and John of four. That contradictory propositions cannot be true, is readily granted; and if you will produce the place in which Matthew says that Jesus Christ appeared twice, and no oftener, it will be farther granted, that he is contradicted by John, in a very material part of his narration; but till you do that, you must excuse me, if I cannot grant, that the Evangelists have contradicted each other in this point: for to common understandings it is pretty evident, that if Christ appeared four times, according to John's account, he must have appeared twice, according to that of Matthew and Luke, and thrice, according to that of Mark.

The different Evangelists are not only accused of contradicting each other, but Luke is said to have contradicted himself; for in his gospel he tells us, that Jesus ascended into heaven from Bethany; and in the Acts of the Apostles, of which he is the reputed author, he informs us, that Jesus ascended from Mount Olivet. Your objection proceeds either from your ignorance of geography, or your ill will to Christianity; and upon either supposition, deserves our contempt; be pleased, however, to remember for the future, that Bethany was not only the name of a town, but of a district of Mount Olivet adjoining to the town.

From this specimen of the contradictions ascribed to the historians of the life of Christ, you may judge for yourselves, what little reason there is to reject Christianity upon their account; and how sadly you will be imposed upon (in a matter of more consequence to you than any other) if you take every thing for a contradiction, which the uncandid adversaries of Christianity think proper to call one.

Before I put an end to this address, I cannot help taking notice of an argument by which some philosophers have of late endeavoured to overturn the whole system of revelation: and it is the more necessary to give an answer to their objection, as it is become a common subject of philosophical conversation, especially amongst those who have visited the continent. The objection tends to invalidate, as is supposed, the authority of Moses; by showing that the earth is much older than it can be proved to be from his account of the creation, and the scripture chronology. We contend, that six thousand years have not yet elapsed, since the creation; and these philosophers contend, that they have indubitable proof of the earth's being at the least fourteen thousand years old; and they complain that Moses hangs as a dead weight upon them, and blunts all their zeal for inquiry.

The Canonico Recupero, who, it seems, is engaged in writing the history of Mount Etna, has discovered a stratum of lava, which flowed from that mountain, according to his opinion, in the time of the second Punic war, or about two thousand years ago; this stratum is not yet covered with soil, sufficient for the production of either corn or vines; it requires, then, says the Canon, two thousand years, at least, to convert a stratum of lava into a fertile field. In sinking a pit near Jaci, in the neighbourhood of Etna, they have discovered evident marks of seven distinct lavas, one under the other; the surfaces of which are parallel, and most of them covered with a thick bed of rich earth; now, the eruption which formed the lowest of these lavas (if we may be allowed to reason, says the Canon, from analogy,) flowed from the mountain at least fourteen thousand years ago. —It might be briefly answered to this objection, by denying that there is any thing in the history of Moses repugnant to this opinion concerning the great antiquity of the earth; for though the rise and progress of arts and sciences, and the small multiplication of the human species, render it almost to a demonstration probable, that man has not existed longer upon the surface of this earth, than according to the Mosaic account; yet, that the earth was then created out of nothing, when man was placed upon it, is not, according to the sentiments of some philosophers, to be proved from the original text of sacred scripture; we might, I say, reply with these philosophers, to this formidable objection of the Canon, by granting it in its fullest extent; we are under no necessity, however, of adopting their opinion, in order to show the weakness of the Canon's reasoning. For in the first place, the Canon has not satisfactorily established his main fact, that the lava in question is the identical lava which Diodorus Siculus mentions to have flowed from Etna in the second Carthaginian war; and in the second place, it may be observed, that the time necessary for converting the lavas into fertile fields, must be very different, according to the different consistencies of the lavas, and their different situations, with respect to elevation or depression; to their being exposed to winds, rains, and to other circumstances; just as the time, in which the heaps of iron slag, which resembles lava, are covered with verdure, is different at different furnaces, according to the nature of the slag, and situation of the furnace; and something of this kind is deducible from the account of the Canon himself; since the crevices of this famous stratum are really full of rich, good soil, and have pretty large trees growing in them.

But if all this should be thought not sufficient to remove the objection, I will produce the Canon an analogy in opposition to his analogy, and which is grounded on more certain facts. Etna and Vesuvius resemble each other, in the causes which produce their eruptions, and in the nature of their lavas, and in the time necessary to mellow them into soil fit for vegetation; or if there be any slight difference in this respect, it is probably not greater than what subsists between different lavas of the same mountain. This being admitted, which no philosopher will deny, The Canon's analogy will prove just nothing at all, if we can produce an instance of seven different lavas with interjacent strata of vegetable earth, which have flowed from mount Vesuvius, within the space, not of fourteen thousand, but of somewhat less than seventeen hundred years; for then, according to our analogy, a stratum of lava may be covered with vegetable soil, in about two hundred and fifty years, instead of requiring two thousand for the purpose. The eruption of Vesuvius, which destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii, is rendered still more famous by the death of Pliny, recorded by his nephew, in his letter to Tacitus; this event happened in the year 79: it is not yet then quite seventeen hundred years since Herculaneum was swallowed up: but we are informed by unquestionable authority, that 'the matter which covers the ancient town of Herculaneum, is not the produce of one eruption only; for there are evident marks, that the matter of six eruptions has taken its course over that which lies immediately above the town, and was the cause of its destruction. These strata are either of lava or burnt matter, with veins of good soil betwixt them.'—I will not add another word upon this subject; except that the bishop of the diocese, was not much out in his advice to Canonico Recupero—to take care not to make his mountain older than Moses; though it would have been full as well, to have shut his mouth with a reason, as to have stopped it with the dread of an ecclesiastical censure.

You perceive, with what ease a little attention will remove a great difficulty; but had we been able to say nothing, in explanation of this phenomenon, we should not have acted a very rational part, in making our ignorance the foundation of our infidelity, or suffering a minute philosopher to rob us of our religion.

Your objections to revelation may be numerous; you may find fault with the account which Moses has given of the creation and the fall; you may not be able to get water enough for an universal deluge; nor room enough in the ark of Noah, for all the different kinds of aerial and terrestrial animals; you may be dissatisfied with the command for sacrificing of Isaac, for plundering the Egyptians, and for extirpating the Canaanites; you may find fault with the Jewish economy, for its ceremonies, its sacrifices, and its multiplicity of priests; you may object to the imprecations in the Psalms, and think the immoralities of David, a fit subject for dramatic ridicule; you may look upon the partial promulgation of Christianity, as an insuperable objection to its truth; and waywardly reject the goodness of God toward yourselves, because you do not comprehend how you have deserved it more than others; you may know nothing of the entrance of sin and death into the world, by one man's transgression; nor be able to comprehend the doctrine of the cross and of redemption by Jesus Christ; in short, if your mind is so disposed, you may find food for your scepticism in every page of the Bible, as well as in every appearance of nature; and it is not in the power of any person but yourselves, to clear up your doubts; you must read, and you must think for yourselves; and you must do both with temper, with candour, and with care. Infidelity is a rank weed; it is nurtured by our vices, and cannot be plucked up as easily as it may be planted: your difficulties, with respect to revelation, may have first arisen from your own reflection on the religious indifference of those, whom, from your earliest infancy, you have been accustomed to revere and imitate; domestic irreligion may have made you willing hearers of libertine conversation; and the uniform prejudices of the world, may have finished the business at a very early age; and left you to wander through life without a principle to direct your conduct, and to die without hope. We are far from wishing you to trust the word of the clergy for the truth of your religion; we beg of you to examine it to the bottom, to try it, to prove it, and not to hold it fast unless you find it good. Till you are disposed to undertake this task, it becomes you to consider with great seriousness and attention, whether it can be for your interest to esteem a few witty sarcasms, or metaphysical subtleties, or ignorant misrepresentations, or unwarranted assertions, as unanswerable arguments against revelation; and a very slight reflection will convince you, that it will certainly be for your reputation, to employ the flippancy of your rhetoric, and the poignancy of your ridicule, upon any subject, rather than upon the subject of religion.

I take my leave with recommending to your notice, the advice which Mr. Locke gave to a young man, who was desirous of becoming acquainted with the doctrines of the Christian religion. 'Study the Holy Scripture, especially the New Testament: therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author; Salvation for its end; and Truth without any mixture of error for its matter.

Bishop Watson.

§ 145. *Instances of the Eloquence of the Scriptures.*

If we consider the nature of eloquence in general, as it is defined by Aristotle to be a faculty of persuasion, which Cicero makes to consist in three things, instructing, delighting, and moving our readers' or hearers' mind, we shall find that the Holy Scriptures have a fair claim to these several properties.

For where can we meet with such a plain representation of things, in point of history, and such cogent arguments in point of precept, as this one volume furnishes us with? Where is there an history written more simply and naturally, and at the same time more nobly and loftily, than that of the creation of the world? Where are the great lessons of morality taught with such force and perspicuity (except in the sermons of Christ, and the writings of the apostles) as in the book of Deuteronomy? Where is the whole compass of devotion, in the several forms of confession, petition, supplication, thanksgiving, vows, and praises, so punctually taught us as in the book of Psalms? Where are the rules of wisdom and prudence so convincingly laid down as in the Proverbs of Solomon, and the choice sentences of Ecclesiastes? Where is vice and impiety of all kinds more justly displayed, and more fully confuted, than in the threats and admonitions of the prophets? And what do the little warmths, which may be raised in the fancy by an artificial composure and vehemence of style, signify, in comparison of those strong impulses and movements which the Holy Scriptures make upon good men's souls, when they represent the frightful justice of an angry God to stubborn offenders, and the bowels of his compassion, and unspeakable kindness, to all true penitents and faithful servants?

The Holy Scripture indeed has none of those flashy ornaments of speech, wherewith human compositions so plentifully abound; but then it has a sufficient stock of real and peculiar beauties to recommend it. To give one instance for all out of the history of Joseph and his family; the whole relation indeed is extremely natural: but the manner of his discovering himself to his brethren is inimitable. 'And Joseph could no longer refrain himself—but, lifting up his voice with tears, said—I am Joseph—doth my father yet live?—And his brethren could not answer him: for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said to his brethren, Come near me, I pray you: and they came near, and he said, I am Joseph—your brother—whom ye sold into Egypt.' Nothing certainly can be a more lively description of Joseph's tender respect for his father, and love for his brethren: and, in like manner, when his brethren returned, and told their father in what splendour and glory his son Joseph lived, it is said, that 'Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not; but when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent for him, the spirit of Jacob, their father, revived; and Israel said, it is enough—Joseph my son is yet alive—I will go—and see him—before I die.' Here is such a contrast of different passions, of utter despondency, dawning hope, and confirmed faith, triumphant joy, and paternal affection, as no orator in the world could express more movingly, in a more easy manner, or shorter compass of words.

Nay more, had I leisure to gratify the curious, I might easily show, that those very figures and schemes of speech, which are so much admired in profane authors, as their great beauties and ornaments, are no where more conspicuous than in the sacred.

One figure, for instance, esteemed very florid among the masters of art, is, when all the members of a period begin with the same word. The figure is called anaphora; and yet (if I mistake not) the 15th Psalm affords us a very beautiful passage of this kind. 'Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly; he that backbiteth not with his tongue; he that maketh much of them that fear the Lord; he that sweareth to his hurt, and changeth not; he that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that does these things shall never be moved.'

The ancient orators took a great deal of pride in ranging finely their antitheta. Cicero is full of this, and uses it many times to a degree of affectation; and yet I cannot find any place wherein he has surpassed that passage of the prophet. 'He that killed an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood.' But above all other figures, that whereon poets and orators love chiefly to dwell, is the hypotyposis, or lively description; and yet we shall hardly find in the best classic authors, any thing comparable in this regard, to the Egyptians' destruction in the Red Sea, related in the song of Moses and Miriam; to the description of the leviathan in Job; to the descent of God, and a storm at sea, in the Psalmist; to the intrigues of an adulterous woman in the Proverbs; to the pride of the Jewish ladies in Isaiah; and to the plague of locusts in Joel; which is represented like the ravaging of a country; and storming a city by an army; 'A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness, and nothing shall escape them. Before their face people shall be pained; all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; they shall march every one in his way, and they shall not break their ranks. They shall run to and fro in the city, they shall run upon the wall; they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter into the windows as a thief.' The description is more remarkable, because the analogy is carried quite throughout without straining, and the whole processes of a conquering army in the manner of their march, their destroying the provision, and burning the country, in their scaling the walls, breaking into houses, and running about the vanquished city, are fully delineated and set before our eyes.

From these few examples (for it would be endless to proceed in instances of this kind) it appears, that the Holy Bible is far from being defective in point of eloquence, and (what is a peculiar commendation of it) its style is full of a grateful variety; sometimes majestic as becomes that 'high and holy one who inhabiteth eternity:' sometimes so low as to answer the other part of his character, 'who dwelleth with him that is of an humble spirit:' and at all times so proper, and adapted so well to the several subjects it treats of, that whoever considers it attentively will perceive, in the narrative parts of it, a strain so simple and unaffected; in the prophetic and devotional, something so animated and sublime; and in the doctrinal and preceptive, such an air of dignity and authority, as seems to speak its original divine.

We allow, indeed, that method is an excellent art, highly conducive to the clearness and perspicuity of discourse; but then we affirm, that it is an art of modern invention in comparison to the times when the sacred penman wrote, and incompatible with the manner of writing, which was then in vogue. We indeed in Europe, who, in this matter, have taken our examples from Greece, can hardly read any thing with pleasure, that is not digested into order and sorted under proper heads; but the eastern nations, who were used to a free way of discourse, and never cramped their notions by methodical limitations, would have despised a composition of this kind, as much as we do a school-boy's theme, with all the formalities of its exordiums, ratios, and confirmations. And if this was no precedent for other nations, much less can we think, that God Almighty's methods ought to be confined to human laws, which, being designed for the narrowness of our conceptions, might be improper and injurious to his, whose 'thoughts are as far above ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth.'

The truth is, inspiration is, in some measure, the language of another world, and carries in it the reasoning of spirits, which, without controversy, is vastly different from ours. We indeed, to make things lie plain before our understandings, are forced to sort them out into distinct partitions, and consider them by little and little, that so at last, by gradual advances, we may come to a tolerable conception of them; but this is no argument for us to think that pure spirits do reason after this manner. Their understandings are quick and intuitive: they see the whole compass of rational inferences at once; and have no need of those little methodical distinctions which oftentimes help the imperfections of our intellects. Now, though we do not assert, that the language of the Holy Scriptures is an exact copy of the reasoning of the spiritual world; yet since they came by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, it is but reasonable to expect that they should preserve some small relish of it: as books translated into another tongue always retain some marks of their originals. And hence it comes to pass, that though the Holy Ghost does vouchsafe to speak in the language of men, yet in his divine compositions, there are some traces to be found of that bold and unlimited ratiocination, which is peculiar to the heavenly inhabitants, whose noble and flaming thoughts are never clogged with the cold and jejune laws of human method.

Stackhouse.

§ 146. *A Prayer or Psalm.*

Most gracious Lord God, my merciful Father; from my youth up, my Creator, my Redeemer, my Comforter. Thou, O Lord, soundest and searchest the depths and secrets of all hearts; thou acknowledgest the upright of heart; thou judgest the hypocrite; thou ponderest men's thoughts and doings as in a balance; thou measurest their intentions as with a line; vanity and crooked ways cannot be hid from thee.

Remember, O Lord, how thy servant hath walked before thee; remember what I have first sought, and what hath been principal in my intentions. I have loved thy assemblies, I have mourned for the divisions of thy church, I have delighted in the brightness of thy sanctuary. This vine, which thy right hand hath planted in this nation, I have ever prayed unto thee, that it might have the first and the latter rain, and that it might stretch her branches to the seas and to the floods. The state and bread of the poor and oppressed have been precious in mine eyes; I have hated all cruelty and hardness of heart; I have (though in a despised weed) procured the good of all men. If any have been my enemies, I thought not of them, neither hath the sun almost set upon my displeasures, but I have been as a dove, free from superfluity of maliciousness. Thy creatures have been my books, but thy Scriptures much more. I have sought thee in the courts, fields, and gardens; but I have found thee in thy temples.

Thousands have been my sins, and ten thousands my transgressions, but thy sanctifications have remained with me, and my heart (through thy grace) hath been an unquenched coal upon thine altar.

O Lord, my strength! I have since my youth met with thee in all my ways, by thy fatherly compassions, by thy comfortable chastisements, and by thy most visible providence. As thy favours have increased upon me, so have thy corrections; so as thou hast been always near me, O Lord! And ever as my worldly blessings were exalted, so secret darts from thee have pierced me; and when I have ascended before men, I have descended in humiliation before thee. And now, when I thought most of peace and honour, thy hand is heavy upon me, and hath humbled me according to thy former loving-kindness, keeping me still in thy fatherly school, not as a bastard, but as a child. Just are thy judgments upon me for my sins, which are more in number than the sands of the sea, but have no proportion to thy mercies; for what are the sands of the sea? Earth, heavens, and all these, are nothing to thy mercies. Besides my innumerable sins, I confess before thee, that I am a debtor to thee for the gracious talent of thy gifts and graces, which I have neither put into a napkin, nor put it, as I ought, to exchangers, where it might have made best profit, but mis-spent it in things for which I was least fit; so I may truly say, my soul hath been a stranger in the course of my pilgrimage. Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for my Saviour's sake, and receive me into thy bosom, or guide me into thy ways.

Lord Bacon.

§ 147. *The Doctrine of Christ a Doctrine of Truth and Simplicity.*

The Gospel of Christ, as taught by himself and his apostles, in its original plainness and purity, is a doctrine of truth and simplicity, a doctrine so easy to be understood, so reasonable to be practised, so agreeable to the natural notions and reason of mankind, so beneficial in its effects, if men were really governed by it; teaching them nothing but the worship of the true God, through the mediation of Christ; and towards each other, justice, righteousness, meekness, charity, and universal good-will; in expectation of a future judgment, and of a lasting state of happiness in a better world, for them who love God and keep his commandments; this doctrine of Christ, I say, in its native simplicity and purity, is so reasonable, so excellent, and of such irresistible evidence, that had it never been corrupted by superstitions from within, it never could have been opposed by power from without; but it must of necessity have captivated mankind to the obedience of faith; till the knowledge of the Lord had filled the earth, as the waters cover the sea.—

Whatever difficulties there may be in some of the historical, or prophetical, or controversial parts of the books of Scripture, yet as to the practical part, the duties required of a Christian in order to salvation, there is no man that ever read the sermons of Christ and his apostles, or ever heard them read, but understood perfectly well what our Saviour meant by commanding us to worship the one true God of nature, the Author and Lord of the universe, and to do to all men as we would they should do to us; and that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;" in expectation of being righteously and impartially adjudged, according to our works, to a state of happiness or misery in the world to come; by our Saviour himself, our merciful and compassionate judge. There never was any man in the Christian world, but felt the reasonableness and importance of this doctrine; and, whenever these things have been repeated to him, was immediately conscious to himself, either of having followed or transgressed these precepts.

Dr. Clark.

§ 148. *On the Superiority of Sacred History and Christian Philosophy.*

In the histories which have been left us by men, we see nothing but the agency of man. They are men who obtain the victories, who take towns, who subdue kingdoms, who dethrone sovereigns, to elevate themselves to the supreme power: God appears in no part, men are the sole actors of all these things. But in the history of the Holy Books it is God alone who performs the whole; God alone causeth kings to reign, placeth them upon their thrones, or deposeth them again. It is God alone who opposeth the enemy, who sacks towns, who disposeth of kingdoms and empires, who giveth peace or exciteth war: God alone appeareth in this Sacred History: it is he, if I may so speak, who is the sole hero. The kings and the conquerors of the earth appear but as the ministers of his will. In short, these Divine Books unfold the ways of Providence. God, who conceals himself in the other events recorded in our histories, seems to reveal himself in these: and it is in this book alone that we ought to learn to read the other histories which men have left us.

The Holy Books which have preserved religion to our times, contain the first monuments of the origin of things. They are more ancient than all the fabulous productions of the human mind, which have since, in so melancholy a manner, amused the credulity of the following ages. And as error always springs from truth, and is a corrupt imitation of it, it is in the principal actions of this Divine History, that the fables of Paganism find their foundation; so that one may say there is no error which pays not thereby homage to the antiquity and authority of our Sacred Writings.

The sincerity of Moses appears in the simplicity of his history. He used no precautions to gain credit, because he supposes those for whom he wrote were not destitute of faith, and because he relates none but facts which were publicly known, to preserve the memory of them rather among their descendants, than to instruct that generation in the nature of them.

He concealeth not in a mysterious manner the holy books from the people, lest they should discover the falsehood of them, like as the vain oracles of the Sybils were laid up with care in the Capitol, which was built to keep up the pride of the Romans, exposed to the eyes of the priests alone, and produced from time to time by fragments to justify to the minds of the people, either a dangerous enterprise, or an unjust war. Here the prophetic books were daily read by a whole people: the young and old, the women and children, the priests and the common people, the kings and subjects, were bound without ceasing to have them in their hands; every one had right to study their duty, and to discover their hopes there. Far from flattering their pride, they declared fully the ingratitude of their fathers; they announced in every page their misfortunes to be the just chastisement of their crimes; they reproached kings with their lewdness; priests with their injustice; the great with their profusion; the people with their inconstancy and infidelity, and this notwithstanding these holy books were dear to them, and by the oracles which they saw there to be accomplished every day, they waited with confidence the fulfilment of those of which all the world at this day are the witnesses.—

There is a nobleness and an elevation in the maxims of the Gospel, to which mean and grovelling minds cannot attain. The religion which forms great souls, appears to be made only for them: and in order to be great, or to become so, there is a necessity of being a Christian.—

Philosophy discovered the shame of the passions; but she did not teach how to conquer them: her pompous precepts were rather the eulogium of virtue, than the remedy of vice. It was even necessary for the glory and triumph of religion, that the greatest geniuses, and all the power of human reason should have exhausted themselves, in order to render men virtuous. If the Socrateses and the Platos, had not been teachers of the world before Jesus Christ, and had not in vain attempted to regulate manners, and correct men by the sole force of reason, man might have been able to do honour by his virtue to the superiority of reason, or the beauty of virtue itself: but these preachers of wisdom did not make wise men; and it was necessary that the vain efforts of philosophy should prepare new triumphs for grace.

In short, it was religion, which exhibited to the world the true wise man, so long since announced to us, by all the pomp and parade of human reason. She has not limited all her glory, like philosophy, to the essay of hardly forming one sage in a century amongst men: she hath peopled with them cities, empires, deserts; and the whole universe has been to her another Lycæum, where in the midst of public places, she hath preached wisdom to all mankind. It is not only amongst the most polite nations that she hath chosen her wise men: the Greek and Barbarian, the Roman and Scythian, hath been equally called to her divine philosophy: it is not only for the learned that she hath reserved the sublime knowledge of her mysteries; the simple have prophesied as well as the sage; and the ignorant themselves have become her doctors and apostles. It was necessary that the true wisdom should become the wisdom of all men.

But further still: her doctrine was foolishness in appearance; and yet, the philosophers submitted their proud reason to this holy folly: she announced nothing but crosses and sufferings; and yet the Cæsars became her disciples. She alone came to teach mankind that chastity, humility, temperance might be seated on the throne, and that the seat of the passions and of pleasures, might become the seat of virtue and innocence. What a glory was this for religion.

Massillon, Bishop of Clermont.

§ 149. *The Light of Reason imperfect.*

If the glorious light of the Gospel be sometimes overcast with clouds of doubt, so is the light of our reason too. But shall we deprive ourselves of the advantage of either, because those clouds cannot perhaps be entirely removed while we remain in this mortal life? Shall we obstinately and frowardly shut our eyes against that day-spring from on high that has visited us, because we are not as yet able to bear the full blaze of his beams? Indeed, not even in heaven itself, not in the highest state of perfection to which a finite being can ever attain, will all the counsels of Providence, all the height and the depth of the infinite wisdom of God, be ever disclosed or understood. Faith, even then, will be necessary; and there will be mysteries which cannot be penetrated by the most exalted archangel, and truths which cannot be known by him otherwise than from revelation, or believed upon any other ground of assent than a submissive confidence in the divine wisdom. What, then, shall man presume that his weak and narrow understanding is sufficient to guide him into all truth, without any need of revelation or faith? Shall he complain that the ways of God are not like his ways, and past his finding out? True philosophy, as well as true Christianity, would teach us a wiser and modester part. It would teach us to be content within those bounds which God has assigned to us, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Lord Littleton.

§ 150. *The Simplicity of the Sacred Writers.*

I cannot forbear taking notice of one other mark of integrity which appears in all the compositions of the sacred writers, and particularly the Evangelists; and that is, the simple, unaffected, unornamental, and unostentatious manner, in which they deliver truths so important and sublime, and facts so magnificent and wonderful, as are capable, one would think, of lighting up a flame of oratory, even in the dullest and coldest breasts. They speak of an angel descending from heaven to foretel the miraculous conception of Jesus; of another proclaiming his birth, attended by a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, "and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men;" of his star appearing in the East; of angels ministering to him in the wilderness; of his glory in the mount; of a voice twice heard from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son;" of innumerable miracles performed by him, and by his disciples in his name; of his knowing the thoughts of men; of his foretelling future events; of prodigies accompanying his crucifixion and death; of an angel descending in terrors, opening his sepulchre, and frightening away the soldiers who were set to guard it; of his rising from the dead, ascending into heaven, and pouring down, according to his promise, the various and miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles and disciples. All these amazing incidents do these inspired historians relate nakedly and plainly, without any of the colourings and heightenings of rhetoric, or so much as a single note of admiration; without making any comment or remark upon them, or drawing from them any conclusion in honour either of their master or themselves, or to the advantage of the religion they preached in his name; but contenting themselves with relating the naked truth, whether it seems to make for them or against them; without either magnifying on the one hand, or palliating on the other, they leave their cause to the unbiassed judgment of mankind, seeking, like genuine apostles of the Lord of truth, to convince rather than to persuade; and therefore coming, as St. Paul speaks of his preaching, "not with excellency of speech,—not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but with demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, that," adds he, "your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." And let it be remembered that he, who speaks this, wanted not learning, art, or eloquence, as is evident from his speeches recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and from the testimony of that great critic Longinus, who, in reckoning up the Grecian orators, places among them Paul of Tarsus; and surely, had they been left solely to the suggestions and guidance of human wisdom, they would not have failed to lay hold on such topics, as the wonders of their master's life, and the transcendent purity and perfection of the noble, generous, benevolent morality contained in his precepts, furnished them with. These topics, I say, greater than ever Tully, or Demosthenes, or Plato, were possessed of, mere human wisdom would doubtless have prompted them to make use of, in order to recommend, in the strongest manner, the religion of Jesus Christ to mankind, by turning their attention to the divine part of his character, and hiding, as it were in a blaze of heavenly light and glory, his infirmities, his sufferings, and his death. And had they upon such topics as these, and in such a cause, called into their assistance all the arts of composition, rhetoric, and logic, who would have blamed them for it? Not those persons, I presume, who, dazzled and captivated with the glittering ornaments of human wisdom, made a mock at the simplicity of the Gospel, and think it wit to ridicule the style and language of the Holy Scriptures. But the all-wise Spirit of God, by whom these sacred writers were guided into all truth, thought fit to direct or permit them to proceed in a different method; a method, however, very analogous to that, in which he hath been pleased to reveal himself to us in the great book of nature, the stupendous frame of the universe; all whose wonders he hath judged it sufficient to lay before us in silence, and expects from our observations the proper comments and deductions, which, having endued us with reason, he hath enabled us to make. And though a careless and superficial spectator may fancy he perceives even in this fair volume many inconsistencies, defects, and superfluities; yet to a diligent, unprejudiced, and rational inquirer, who will take pains to examine the laws, consider and compare the several parts, and regard their use and tendency, with reference to the whole design of this amazing structure, as far as his short abilities can carry him, there will appear, in those instances which he is capable of knowing, such evident characters of wisdom, goodness, and power, as will leave him no room to doubt of their author, or to suspect that in those particulars which he hath not examined, or to a thorough knowledge of which he cannot perhaps attain, there is nothing but folly, weakness, and malignity. The same thing might be said of the written book, the second volume, if I may so speak, of the revelation of God, the Holy Scriptures. For as in the first, so also in this are there many passages, that to a cursory, unobserving reader appear idle, unconnected, unaccountable, and inconsistent with those marks of truth, wisdom, justice, mercy, and benevolence, which in others are so visible, that the most careless and inattentive cannot but discern them. And even these, many of them, at least, will often be found, upon a closer and stricter examination, to accord and coincide with the other more plain and more intelligible passages, and to be no heterogeneous parts of one and the same wise and harmonious composition. In both, indeed, in the natural as well as the moral book of God, there are, and ever will be, many difficulties, which the wit of man may never be able to resolve; but will a wise philosopher, because he cannot comprehend every thing he sees, reject for that reason all the truths that lie within his reach, and let a few inexplicable difficulties over-balance the many plain and infallible evidences of the finger of God, which appear in all parts, both of his created and written works? Or will he presume so far upon his own wisdom, as to say, God ought to have expressed himself more clearly? The point and exact degree of clearness, which will equally suit the different capacities of men in different ages and countries, will, I believe, be found more difficult to fix than is imagined; since what is clear to one man in a certain situation of mind, time, and place, will inevitably be obscure to another, who views it in other positions, and under other circumstances. How various and even contradictory are the readings and comments, which several men, in the several ages and climates of the world, have made upon nature! And yet her characters are equally legible, and her laws equally intelligible, in all times and in all places: "There is no speech nor language where her voice is not heard: her sound is gone out through all the earth, and her words to the end of the world." All these misrepresentations therefore, and misconstructions, of her works, are chargeable only upon mankind, who have set themselves to study them with various degrees of capacity, application, and impartiality. The question then should be, Why hath God given men such various talents? And not, Why hath not God expressed himself more clearly? And the answer to this question, as far as it concerns man to know, is, that God will require of him according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not. If what is necessary for all to know, is knowable by all; those men upon whom God hath been pleased to bestow capacities and faculties superior to the vulgar, have certainly no just reason to complain of his having left them materials for the exercise of those talents, which, if all things were equally plain to all men, would be of no great advantage to the possessors. If, therefore, there are in the sacred writings, as well as in the works of nature, many passages hard to be understood, it were to be wished, that the wise and learned, instead of being offended at them, and teaching others to be so too, would be persuaded that both God and man expect that they would set themselves to consider and examine them carefully and impartially, and with a sincere desire of discovering and embracing the truth, not with an arrogant unphilosophical conceit of their being already sufficiently wise and knowing. And then I doubt not but most of these objections to revelation, which are now urged with the greatest confidence, would be cleared up and removed, like those formerly made to Creation, and the Being and Providence of God, by those most ignorant, most absurd, and yet most self-sufficient pretenders to reason and philosophy, the Atheists and Sceptics. *West.*

§ 151. *The superiority of Christian Philosophy over the Stoical.*

Epictetus often lays it down as a maxim, that it is impossible for one person to be in fault, and another to be the sufferer. This, on the supposition of a future state, will certainly be made true at last; but in the stoical sense and system, is an absolute extravagance. Take any person of plain understanding, with all the feelings of humanity about him, and see whether the subtlest Stoic will ever be able to convince him, that while he is insulted, oppressed, and tortured, he doth not suffer. See what comfort it will afford him, to be told, that, if he supports his afflictions and ill-treatment with fortitude and patience, death will set him free, and then he and his persecutor will be equally rewarded; will equally lose all personal existence, and return to the elements. How different are the consolations proposed by Christianity, which not only assures its disciples, that they shall rest from their labours in death, but that their works shall follow them: and by allowing them to rejoice in hope, teaches them the most effectual way of becoming patient in tribulation.

The Stoical doctrine, that human souls are literally parts of the Deity, was equally shocking, and hurtful; as it supposed portions of his being to be wicked and miserable; and by debasing men's ideas of the divine dignity, and teaching them to think themselves essentially as good as he, nourished in their minds an irreligious and fatal presumption. Far differently the Christian system represents mankind, not as a part of the essence, but a work of the hand of God: as created in a state of improveable virtue and happiness; fallen by an abuse of free will, into sin, misery, and weakness; but redeemed from them by an Almighty Saviour; furnished with additional knowledge and strength; commanded to use their best endeavours; made sensible, at the same time, how wretchedly defective they are; yet assured of endless felicity on a due exertion of them. The Stoic philosophy insults human nature and discourages all our attempts, by enjoining and promising a perfection in this life, of which we feel ourselves incapable. The Christian religion shows compassion to our weakness, by prescribing to us only the practicable task of aiming continually at farther improvements, and animates our endeavours, by the promise of a divine aid, equal to every trial.

Specifying thus the errors and defects of so celebrated a system, is an unpleasing employment: but in an age, fond of preferring the guesses of human sagacity before the unerring declarations of God, it seemed on this occasion necessary to observe, that the Christian morality is agreeable to reason and nature; that of the Stoics, for the most part, founded on notions intelligible to few; and which none could admit, without contradiction to their own hearts. They reasoned, many times, admirably well, but from false principles; and the noblest of their practical precepts, being built on a sandy basis, lay at the mercy of every strong temptation.

Stoicism is indeed in many points inferior to the doctrine of Socrates, which did not teach, that all externals were indifferent, which did teach a future state of recompense; and agreeably to that, forbad suicide. It doth not belong to the present subject to show, how much even this best system is excelled by Christianity. It is sufficient just to observe, that the author of it died in a profession, which he had always made of his belief in the popular deities, whose superstitions and impure worship were the great source of corruption in the Heathen world; and the last words he uttered were a direction to his friend, for the performance of an idolatrous ceremony. This melancholy instance of ignorance and error, in the most illustrious character for wisdom and virtue in all Heathen antiquity, is not mentioned as a reflection on his memory, but as a proof of human weakness in general. Whether reason could have discovered the great truths which in these days are ascribed to it, because now seen so clearly by the light of the Gospel, may be a question; but that it never did, is an undeniable fact; and that is enough to teach us thankfulness for the blessing of a better information. Socrates, who had, of all mankind, the fairest pretensions to set up for an instructor, and reformer of the world, confessed that he knew nothing, referred to tradition, and acknowledged the want of a superior guide: and there is a remarkable passage in Epictetus, in which he represents it as the office of his supreme God, or of one deputed by him, to appear among mankind, as a teacher and example.

Upon the whole, the several sects of Heathen philosophy serve, as so many striking instances of the imperfection of human wisdom; and of the extreme need of a divine assistance, to rectify the mistakes of depraved reason, and to replace natural religion on its true foundation. The Stoics every where testify the noblest zeal for virtue, and the honour of God: but they attempted to establish them on principles inconsistent with the nature of man, and contradictory to truth and experience. By a direct consequence of these principles they were liable to be seduced, and in fact, often were seduced into pride, hard-heartedness, and the last dreadful extremity of human guilt, self-murder.

But however indefensible the philosophy of the Stoics in several instances may be, it appears to have been of very important use, in the Heathen world; and they are, on many accounts, to be considered in a very respectable light. Their doctrine of evidence and fixed principles, was an excellent preservative from the mischiefs, that might have arisen from the scepticism of the Academics and Pyrrhonists, if unopposed; and their zealous defence of a particular providence, a valuable antidote to the atheistical scheme of Epicurus. To this may be added, that their strict notions of virtue in most points, (for they sadly failed in some,) and the lives of several among them, must contribute a good deal to preserve luxurious states from an absolutely universal dissoluteness; and the subjects of arbitrary government, from a wretched and contemptible pusillanimity.

Even now, their compositions may be read with great advantage, as containing excellent rules of self-government, and of social behaviour; of a noble reliance on the aid and protection of heaven, and of a perfect resignation and submission to the divine will; points which are treated with great clearness, and with admirable spirit, in the lessons of the Stoics; and though their directions are seldom practicable on their principles, in trying cases, may be rendered highly useful in subordination to Christian reflections.

If, among those who are so unhappy as to remain unconvinced of the truth of Christianity, any are prejudiced against it by the influence of unwarrantable inclinations; such persons will find very little advantage in rejecting the doctrines of the New Testament for those of the Portico; unless they think it an advantage to be laid under moral restraints, almost equal to those of the gospel, while they are deprived of its encouragements and supports. Deviations from the rules of sobriety, justice, and piety, meet with small indulgence in the Stoic writings; and they, who profess to admire Epictetus, unless they pursue that severely virtuous conduct which he every where prescribes, will find themselves treated by him with the utmost degree of scorn and contempt. An immoral character is, indeed, more or less, the outcast of all sects of philosophy; and Seneca quotes even Epicurus, to prove the universal obligation of a virtuous life. Of this great truth, God never left himself without witness. Persons of distinguished talents and opportunities seem to have been raised from time to time by Providence, to check the torrent of corruption, and to preserve the sense of moral obligations on the minds of the multitude, to whom the various occupations of life left but little leisure to form deductions of their own. But then they wanted a proper commission to enforce their precepts; they intermixed with them, through false reasoning, many gross mistakes; and their unavoidable ignorance, in several important points, entangled them with doubts which easily degenerated into pernicious errors.

If there are others, who reject Christianity, from motives of dislike to its peculiar doctrines, they will scarcely fail of entertaining more favourable impressions of it, if they can be prevailed on, with impartiality to compare the Holy Scriptures, from whence alone the Christian religion is to be learned, with the Stoic writings; and then fairly to consider, whether there is any thing to be met with in the discoveries of our blessed Saviour, in the writings of his apostles, or even in the obscurest parts of the prophetic books, by which, equitably interpreted, either their senses, or their reason are contradicted, as they are by the paradoxes of these philosophers: and if not, whether notices from above, of things in which, though we comprehend but imperfectly, we are possibly much more interested, than at present we discern, ought not to be received with implicit veneration; as useful exercises and trials of that duty, which finite understandings owe to infinite wisdom.

Miss Carter.

§ 152. *The more we study the Scriptures the more we shall perceive their divine origin, and the more we shall admire them.*

The more we read, the more we meditate on the Holy Scriptures, the more we shall discover in them an inexhaustible source of light, and of all manner of instruction; that their language is not the language of men, nor the subject a production of their ingenuity; that they have a character peculiar to themselves, and different from the compositions even of the greatest and best men; that they are exempt from all vulgar passions and interests, and to the ordinary views of human prudence and forecast; in fine, that no man ever raised himself so much above humanity as to produce a work in which all is so superior to man.

The most accurate of the Pagan authors are justly charged with errors, darkness, and uncertainties, with respect both to facts and doctrine; but it became the wise and great Being who inspired the sacred penmen, to exempt their works from all such imputations; and, accordingly, he has favoured them with every argument of truth and persuasion, adorned them with the graces of language and sentiment, lighted up and enlivened them with the brightest examples of virtue and sanctity, annexed to their study and meditation such helps and communications of his Holy Spirit as cannot be described, and made the belief and practice of them the only foundation of true peace and happiness.

Every one readily allows no subject can be equal to the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that is, to the incarnation and birth; the miracles and doctrine; the sufferings and death; the resurrection and ascension of a God become man to reform and save a sinful and lost world. And whoever imagines this history can be better written than it is by the Evangelists, has it yet to learn. But though it becomes a Christian to be particularly conversant in this and the other writings of the New Testament, yet there is not any part of the Old which does not furnish ample matter of instruction.—The book of Genesis, in the account it gives of the creation, of the fall and punishment of our first parents, of the righteousness of Noah, of the deluge, of the wonderful obedience of Abraham, and the promise made by God to reward it, of the destruction of Sodom, and the providence of God over the patriarch Joseph, presents to our minds the most suitable subjects to fill them with every christian sentiment of reverence for the Supreme Being and his laws, love of his goodness, and dread of his justice. When we go on to Exodus, we see the wonders wrought by the Almighty in favour of his people, the impenitence of Pharaoh, and the various chastisements by which the murmurings and idolatry of the Israelites in the desert were punished. Leviticus and Numbers set forth the accuracy which God exacts in his worship; Deuteronomy, the sanctity of his laws; Joshua, the accomplishment of his promises. In the book of Judges, we see the strength and weakness of Samson; in that of Ruth, the plain-dealing and equity of Boaz; in those of Kings, the holiness of Samuel, of Elijah, of Elisha, and the other prophets; the reprobation of Saul; the fall and repentance of David, his mildness and patience; the wisdom and sin of Solomon; the piety of Hezekiah and Josiah. In Esdras, the zeal for the law of God; in Tobit, the conduct of a holy family; in Judith the power of grace; in Esther, prudence; in Job, a pattern of admirable patience. The Maccabees afford such instances of personal and national bravery; such an exalted and generous love of our country, and all this grounded on the true principles of valour and patriotism, as the most boasted achievements in profane story are perfect strangers to. The Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and the other two books which go under the title of the Wisdom of Solomon and of the Son of Sirach, teach a more useful and sublime philosophy than all the writings which Greece and Rome have published. The noble images and reflections, the profound reasonings on human actions, and excellent precepts for the government of life, sufficiently witness their inspired origin. This treasure, indeed, is thrown together in a confused magnificence, above all order, that every one may collect and digest such observations as chiefly tend to his own particular instruction. And though it behoves us to reverence the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, rather than pretend to assign the reasons for his dispensing it in this or that manner, yet, I think, we perceive the fitness of the method here taken, in setting forth the nature, substance, and end of our obligations; and, without entering on minute discussions, in taking in the whole compass of duty; for by this means the paths of life are not only pointed out to each individual, and his personal character formed; but the minds of mankind, in general, are furnished and enriched with the beauty, copiousness, and variety of all virtues.—The prophets announce not only the promises, but also the characteristic marks of the Messiah, with the threats against sinners, and those calamities which were to befall the Jews and other nations. The Psalms unite in themselves the chief subjects and all the different excellencies of the Old Testament. In a word, every thing in the Sacred Writings will appear, as it truly is, holy, grand, and profitable, provided it be read with suitable dispositions. *Phillips.*

§ 153. *Beautiful Instances of Friendship in the Scriptures.*

One of the strongest and most affecting instances of a faithful attachment to be met with in history, occurs in the friendship which subsisted between two females. The instance alluded to, is recorded in the Jewish annals, and most pathetically related by one of the sacred penmen. The reader need not be told, that this is the friendship of Naomi and Ruth.

Two very remarkable instances of friendship occur in the history of our Saviour's life: it may not perhaps be altogether unnecessary to state them in all their striking circumstances.

The Evangelist, in relating the miracles which Christ performed at Bethany by restoring a person to life who had lain some days in the grave, introduces his narrative by emphatically observing, that "Jesus loved Lazarus;" intimating, it should seem, that the sentiments which Christ entertained of Lazarus, were a distinct and peculiar species of that general benevolence with which he was actuated towards all mankind. Agreeably to this explication of the sacred historian's meaning, when the sisters of Lazarus sent to acquaint Jesus with the state in which their brother lay; they did not even mention his name; but pointed him out by a more honourable and equally notorious designation; the terms of their message were, "behold! he whom thou lovest is sick!" Accordingly, when he informs his disciples of the notice he had thus received, his expression is, "our friend Lazarus sleepeth." Now that Christ did not upon this occasion use the word friend in its loose undistinguishing acceptation, but in a restrained and strictly appropriated sense, is not only manifest from this plain account of the fact itself, but appears farther evident from the sequel. For, as he was advancing to the grave, accompanied with the relations of the deceased, he discovered the same emotions of grief as swelled the bosoms of those with whom Lazarus had been most intimately connected; and sympathizing with their common sorrow, he melted into tears. This circumstance was too remarkable to escape particular observation: and it drew from the spectators what one should think it must necessarily draw from every reader, this natural and obvious reflection, "behold! how he loved him!"

But in the concluding catastrophe of our Saviour's life, he gave a still more decisive proof, that sentiments of the strongest personal attachment and friendship, were not unworthy of being admitted into his sacred bosom. They were too deeply, indeed, impressed, to be extinguished even by the most excruciating torments. In those dreadful moments, observing among the afflicted witnesses of his painful and ignominious sufferings, that faithful follower, who is described by the historian as "the disciple whom he loved;" he distinguished him by the most convincing instance of superior confidence, esteem, and affection, that ever was exhibited to the admiration of mankind. For, under circumstances of the most agonizing torments, when it might be thought impossible for human nature to retain any other sensibility but that of its own inexpressible sufferings; he recommended to the care and protection of this his tried and approved friend, in terms of peculiar regard and endearment, the most tender and sacred object of his private affections. But no language can represent this pathetic and affecting scene, with a force and energy equal to the sublime simplicity of the Evangelist's own narrative: "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother and his mother's sister, and Mary

Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple by, whom he loved; he saith to his mother, Behold thy son! Then he saith to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home."

It may safely be asserted, that among all those memorable examples of friendship which have been celebrated with the highest encomiums by the ancients; there cannot be produced a single instance, in which the most distinguishing features of exalted amity are so strongly displayed, as in the foregoing relation. The only one, perhaps, that bears even a faint resemblance to it, is that famous transaction, recorded by Lucian in his dialogue entitled Toxaris. Eudamidas being on his death bed made his will, by which he bequeathed his aged mother to the care and protection of Aretheus; and his daughter to Charixenus, to be disposed of in marriage according to his discretion; enjoining him, at the same time, to give her as ample a portion as his circumstances would admit. He added, that in case either of the legatees should happen to die. he substituted the survivor in his stead. Charixenus died very soon after the testator: in consequence of which, Aretheus took each of these singularly confidential legacies to himself; and celebrating the marriage of his only daughter and that of his friend, on the same day, he divided his fortune equally between them.

When the very different circumstances attending these respective examples, are duly considered, it must be acknowledged, that the former rises as much above the latter in the proof it exhibits of sublime friendship, as it does in the dignity of the characters concerned. Upon the whole then it appears, that the divine founder of the Christian religion, as well by his own example, as by the spirit of his moral doctrine, has not only encouraged but consecrated friendship. *Melmoth.*

§ 154. *Fine Morality of the Gospel.*

Is it bigotry to believe the sublime truths of the Gospel with full assurance of faith? I glory in such bigotry: I would not part with it for a thousand worlds; I congratulate the man who is possessed of it; for, amidst all the vicissitudes and calamities of the present state, that man enjoys an inexhaustible fund of consolation, of which it is not in the power of fortune to deprive him.

—There is not a book on earth so favourable to all the kind, and all the sublime affections, or so unfriendly to hatred and persecution, to tyranny, injustice, and every sort of malevolence as the Gospel.—It breathes nothing throughout but mercy, benevolence, and peace.—

Poetry is sublime, when it awakens in the mind any great and good affection, as piety, or patriotism. This is one of the noblest effects of the heart. The Psalms are remarkable, beyond all other writings, for their power of inspiring devout emotions. But it is not in this respect only that they are sublime. Of the divine nature they contain the most magnificent descriptions that the soul of man can comprehend. The hundred and fourth Psalm, in particular, displays the power and goodness of Providence, in creating and preserving the world, and the various tribes of animals in it, with such majestic brevity and beauty, as it is vain to look for in any human composition.—

Such of the doctrines of the Gospel as are level to human capacity appear to be agreeable to the purest truth and the soundest morality. All the genius and learning of the Heathen world; all the penetration of Pythagoras, Socrates, and Aristotle, had never been able to produce such a system of moral duty, and so rational an account of Providence and of man, as is to be found in the New Testament. Compared, indeed, to this, all other moral and theological wisdom

Loses discountenanced and like folly shows.
Beattie.

§ 155. *Internal evidence of the Christian Religion.*

First, the morality of the gospel gives it an infinite superiority over all systems of doctrine that ever were devised by man. Were our lives and opinions to be regulated as it prescribes, nothing would be wanting to make us happy: there would be no injustice, no impiety, no disorderly passions; harmony and love would universally prevail; every man, content with his lot, resigned to the divine will, and fully persuaded that a happy eternity is before him, would pass his days in tranquillity and joy, to which neither anxiety, nor pain, nor even the fear of death, could ever give any interruption. The best systems of pagan ethics are very imperfect, and not free from absurdity; and in them are recommended modes of thinking unsuitable to human nature, and modes of conduct which, though they might have been useful in a political view, did not tend to virtue and happiness universal. But of all our Lord's institutions the end and aim is, to promote ~~the~~ happiness, by promoting the virtue of all mankind.

And, secondly, his peculiar doctrines are not like any thing of human contrivance. 'Never man spake like this man.' One of the first names given to that dispensation of things which he came to introduce, was *the kingdom*, or the reign *of heaven.* It was justly so called: being thus distinguished not only from the religion of Moses, the sanctions whereof related to the present life, but also from every human scheme of moral, political, or ecclesiastical legislation.

The views of the heathen moralist extended not beyond this world; those of the Christian are fixed on that which is to come. The former was concerned for his own country only, or chiefly; the latter takes concern in the happiness of all men, of all nations, conditions, and capacities. A few, and but a few, of the ancient philosophers spoke of a future state of retribution as a thing desirable, and not improbable: revelation speaks of it as certain; and of the present life as a state of trial, wherein virtue or holiness is necessary, not only to entitle us to that salvation which, through the mercy of God and the merits of his Son, Christians are taught to look for, but also to prepare us, by habits of piety and benevolence, for a reward, which none but the pure in heart can receive, or could relish.

The duties of piety, as far as the heart is concerned, were not much attended to by the heathen lawgiver. Cicero coldly ranks them with the social virtues, and says very little about them. The sacrifices were mere ceremony. And what the Stoics taught of resignation to the will of heaven, or to the decrees of fate, was so repugnant to some of their other tenets, that little good could be expected from it. But of every Christian virtue piety is an essential part. The love and the fear of God must every moment prevail in the heart of a follower of Jesus; and whether he eat or drink, or whatever he do, it must all be to the glory of the Creator. How different this from the philosophy of Greece and Rome!

In a word, the heathen morality, even in its best form, that is, as two or three of their best philosophers taught it, amounts to little more than this: Be useful to yourselves, your friends, and your country; so shall ye be respectable while ye live, and honoured when ye die; and it is to be hoped ye may receive reward in another life. The language of the Christian lawgiver is different. The world is not worthy of the ambition of an immortal being. Its honours and pleasures have a tendency to debase the mind, and disqualify it for future happiness. Set therefore your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. Let it be your supreme desire to obtain God's favour: and, by a course of discipline, begun here, and to be completed hereafter, prepare yourselves for a readmission into that rank which was forfeited by the fall, and for again being but a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour everlasting.

What an idea is here! Is there any thing like this in Xenophon or Plato, in Cicero, Seneca or Epictetus? 'Whence had this man these things? What wisdom is this that was given him?' surely man gave it not; for man had it not to give. This is an idea which never occurred to human imagination, till it was taught by a poor carpenter of Galilee, and by a few fishermen, who followed him. Yet to the native dignity, and undeniable degeneracy, of human nature, no other moral theory was ever so well adapted; and no other has so direct a tendency to promote the glory of God, and the real good of mankind. Is it possible to explain this upon the principles that usually regulate human affairs? Is it possible for us to believe, that teachers so holy, so benevolent, and so pious, so superior to the world, and so thoroughly disengaged from its allurements, were not taught of God? As easy almost it is to believe, that this world was not made by him. Is it possible for us to imagine, that persons of such a character could have employed their lives in the promulgation of a lie, and willingly encountered persecution and death in support of it? As well may we imagine, that 'an evil tree brings forth good fruit, and that men gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles.'

Beattie.

§ 156. *The Christian Religion furnishes the most elevated conceptions of the Deity.*

What an elevation must it give to our pious affections, to contemplate the supreme Being and his Providence, as revealed to us in Scripture! We are there taught, that man was created in the image of God, innocent and happy; and that he had no sooner fallen into sin, than his Creator, instead of abandoning him and his offspring to the natural consequences of his disobedience, and of their hereditary depravity, was pleased to begin a wonderful dispensation of grace, in order to rescue from perdition, and raise again to happiness, as many as should acquiesce in the terms of the offered salvation, and regulate their lives accordingly.

By the sacred books that contain the history of this dispensation we are farther taught, that God is a spirit, unchangeable, and eternal, universally present, and absolutely perfect; that it is our duty to fear him, as a being of consummate purity and inflexible justice, and to love him as the father of mercies, and the God of all consolation; to trust in him as the friend, the comforter, and the almighty guardian, of all who believe and obey him; to rejoice in him as the best of beings, and adore him as the greatest:—we are taught, that he will make allowance for the frailties of our nature, and pardon the sins of those who repent:—and, that we may see, in the strongest light, his peculiar benignity to the human race, we are taught, that he gave his only Son as our ransom and deliverer; and we are not only permitted, but commanded, to pray to him, and address him as OUR FA-

THER:—we are taught, moreover, that the evils incident to this state of trial are permitted by him, in order to exercise our virtue, and so prepare us for a future state of never-ending felicity; and that these momentary afflictions are pledges of his paternal love, and shall, if we receive them as such, and venerate them accordingly, work out for us 'an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.' If these hopes and these sentiments contribute more to our happiness, and to the purification of our nature, than any thing else in the world can do, surely that religion, to which alone we owe these sentiments and hopes, must be the greatest blessing that ever was conferred on the posterity of Adam.

And is it, after all, but a mere human contrivance; the invention of mean illiterate men, who lived, and who died, in the voluntary promulgation of falsehood? To what other human artifice does this bear any resemblance? Does not this religion as plainly prove itself to be the work of a wise and gracious God, as the absurdity of the pagan superstitions proves them to have been the work of weak and wretched men? *Beattie.*

§ 157. *Insignificance of Man, no objection to Christianity.*

By some well-meaning but weak minds, and by some of a different character, who were vain of their philosophy, the apparent insignificance of the human race may have been thought to lessen the credibility of the Christian religion. Compared to the extent of our solar system, this earth is but a point; and the solar system itself, compared to the universe, may be little more. How then, say they, is it possible to imagine that such creatures as we are, can be of so great importance, as that the Deity should send his Son, accompanied with so many displays of divine power, into this little world, to instruct us by his doctrine and example, and die on a cross to accomplish our salvation?

This is indeed an astonishing proof of the goodness of the Creator, and of the condescension of that glorious Person, who, for our sake, willingly submitted to such debasement. But the infinite goodness and power of God, though surpassing all comprehension, cannot exceed the belief of those who know, that he, in order to communicate felicity, created this boundless universe, with all the varieties of beings it contains; whom he continually supports and governs, and with every individual of whom he is continually present. The object may be too vast for any intelligence that is short of infinite: but to Him who sees all things, and can do all things, who had no beginning, and can have no end, all this must be easy; incomparably easier, indeed, than it is for a father to take care of his child, or for a generous friend to relieve his indigent neighbour. God's dispensations with respect to man may reasonably enough overwhelm us with gratitude and adoration, and with a most humiliating sense of our own unworthiness; but let us take care that they do not raise within us an evil spirit of unbelief, which they will not do, unless we have the inexcusable temerity to judge of him by ourselves; and to infer, because our goodness is nothing, that his cannot be perfect; and, because we are ignorant and weak, that he cannot be omniscient and almighty. Far less absurd would it be, for the unlettered peasant to deny the possibility of calculating eclipses; for the blind to believe, that because they cannot see, there is none else who can; and for the poor to conclude, because they cannot relieve themselves, that it is not in the power of generosity to relieve them.

Great extent is a thing so striking to our imagination, that sometimes, in a moment of forgetfulness, we are apt to think nothing can be important but what is of vast corporeal magnitude: and yet, even to our apprehension, when we are willing to be rational, how much more sublime and more interesting an object is a mind like that of Newton, than the unwieldy force and brutal stupidity of such a monster as the poets describe Polyphemus? Who, that had it in his power, would scruple to destroy a whale, in order to preserve a child? Nay when compared with the happiness of one immortal mind, the greatest imaginable accumulation of inanimate substance must appear an insignificant thing. 'If we consider,' says Bentley, 'the dignity of an intelligent being, and put that in the scale against brute and inanimate matter, we may affirm, without overvaluing human nature, that the soul of one virtuous man is of greater worth and excellency, than the sun and his planets, and all the stars in the world.' Let us not then make bulk the standard of value; or judge of the importance of man from the weight of his body, or from the size or situation of the planet that is now his place of abode.

Our Saviour, as if to obviate objections of this nature, expresses most emphatically the superintending care of Providence, when he teaches, that it is God who adorns the grass of the field, that without him a sparrow falls not to the ground, and that even the hairs of our head are numbered. Yet this is no exaggeration; but must, if God is omniscient and almighty, be literally true. By a stupendous exuberance of animal, vegetable, and mineral production, and by an apparatus still more stupendous (if that were possible) for the distribution of light and heat, he supplies the means of life and comfort to the short-lived inhabitants of this globe. Can it then appear incredible, nay, does not this consideration render it in the highest degree probable, that he has also prepared the means of eternal happiness for beings whom he has formed for eternal duration, whom he has endowed with faculties so noble as those of the human soul, and for whose accommodation chiefly, during their present state of trial, he has provided all the magnificence of this sublunary world. *Beattie.*

§ 158. *Beneficence to the poor more forcibly enjoined by the Gospel, than by any other writings.*

The Christian Scriptures are more copious and explicit upon our obligation to bestow relief upon the poor than almost any other. The description which Christ hath left us of the proceedings of the last day, establishes the obligation of bounty, so far as his authority can be depended upon, beyond controversy. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another.—Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.—And inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." It is not necessary to understand this passage as a literal account of what will actually pass on that day. Supposing it only a scenical description of the rules and principles, by which the supreme arbiter of our destiny will regulate his decisions, it conveys the same lesson to us; it equally demonstrates of how great value and importance these duties in the sight of God are, and what stress will be laid upon them. The apostles also describe this virtue as propitiating the divine favour in an eminent degree: and these recommendations have produced their effect. It does not appear that before the times of Christianity, an hospital, infirmary, or public charity of any kind, existed in the world; whereas most countries in Christendom have long abounded with these institutions. To which may be added, that a spirit of private liberality seems to flourish amidst the decay of many other virtues: not to mention the legal provision for the poor, which obtains in this country, and which was unknown and unthought of by the most polished nations of antiquity. *Paley.*

§ 159. *The simplicity of the Gospel gives it an air of sublimity.*

The graceful negligence of nature always pleases beyond the truest ornaments that art can devise. Indeed they are then truest, when they approach the nearest to this negligence. To attain it, is the very triumph of art. The wise artist, therefore, always completes his studies in the great school of creation, where the forms of elegance lie scattered in an endless variety: and the writer who wishes to possess some portion of that sovereign excellence, simplicity, even though he were an infidel, would have recourse to the Scriptures, and make them his model.—

The pathetic and sublime simplicity of our Saviour's whole description of the last judgment cannot be paralled in any writing of any age.—In the Gospel we find no pompous displays of reasoning; no laboured and difficult distinctions; no long and learned inquiries concerning the nature and kinds of virtue; but virtue itself represented to the life; in examples, and precepts, which are level to the plainest understandings; in familiar occurrences; in short and simple narrations; in actions, or discourses, real or imagined. And perhaps, among other things, it is this unsystematic form, this neglect of art and method, which produces that graceful ease, that venerable, majestic simplicity, that air of truth and originality, which distinguish the Scriptures from all human writings. *Rev. J. Mainwaring.*

§ 160. *The Bible, as a very curious and ancient history, worthy our attention.*

Were the Bible but considered impartially and attentively, in its most advantageous lights; as it contains all the written revelation of God's will now extant; as it is the basis of our national religion, and gives vigour and spirit to all our social laws; as it is the most ancient, and, consequently, curious collection of historical incidents, moral precepts, and political institutions; as the style of it is, in some places, nobly sublime and poetical, and in others, sweetly natural, plain, and unaffected: in a word, as the being well acquainted with it is highly requisite, in order to make men useful and ornamental in this life, to say nothing of their happiness in the next, it is to be hoped, that a cool reflection or two of this sort, might induce the more ingenious and rational among them, to let the Bible take its turn, in their riper years, among those volumes which pass through their hands either for amusement or instruction. And should such an entertainment once become fashionable, of what mighty service would it be to the interest of religion, and consequently the happiness of mankind!

Rev. S. Croxall.

§ 161. *Excellence of the Sacred Writings.*

If we examine the Sacred Records, we shall find they consist of four different kinds, the poetic, oratorical, historical, and didactic forms. The poetic lies chiefly in the book of Psalms, of Job, and several detached passages in the Prophets, particularly of Isaiah. They contain many noble efforts of unmixed poetry or pure imitation; yet these, being all centered in one intention, that of extolling the works, and celebrating the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Deity, do generally partake of the character of eloquence, being chiefly of the lyric kind. In all these, the great character of simplicity is so strongly predominant, that every attempt to embellish them, by adding the supernumerary decorations of style in translation, hath ever been found to weaken and debase them.

As to the oratorical or pathetic parts, innumerable might be produced, equal, if not superior to any recorded by profane antiquity. In these, the leading character of simplicity is no less remarkable. Our Saviour's parables and exhortations are generally admirable in this quality. Filled with unfeigned compassion for the weakness and miseries of man, they breathe nothing but the purest benevolence. St. Paul's last conversation with his friends at Ephesus, on his departure for Jerusalem; his discourse on the resurrection, and on charity; his reproofs, his commendations, his apologies, especially that before Agrippa, are written in the noblest strain of simplicity. And as a perfect model of this kind, we may give the story of Joseph and his brethren, which for tenderness, true pathos, and unmixed simplicity, is beyond compare, superior to any thing that appears in ancient story.

But as the most important part of Scripture lies in the historical and preceptive part; especially in the New Testament, whence chiefly our idea of duty must be drawn; so we find this uniform and simple manner eminently prevailing throughout, in every precept and narration. The history is conveyed in that artless strain which alone could adapt it to the capacities of all mankind; the precepts delivered by our Saviour are drawn from the principles of common sense, improved by the most exalted love of God and man: and either expressed in clear and direct terms, or couched under such images and allusions, as are every where to be found in nature, such as are, and must ever be universally known, and familiar to all mankind; in which we may farther observe, his manner of teaching was greatly superior to the justly applauded Socrates, who, for the most part, drew his images and allusions from the less known arts and manners of the city. Through all this variety of striking allusion and moral precept the style ever continues the same, unadorned, simple, vehement, and majestic; yet never drawing the reader's attention on itself, but on the divine sentiments it conveys.

To this we may farther add, that these several kinds of composition are mixed and united with such propriety and force, as is scarce to be equalled in any other writings. The poetical parts are heightened by the greatest strokes of eloquence and precept; the pathetic by the noblest imagery and strictest morals; and the preceptive is strengthened and enforced by all the aids of poetry, eloquence, and parable; calculated at once to engage the imagination, to touch the passions, and command the reason of mankind.

Rev. J. Brown.

§ 162. *The gay, young Altamont dying.*

The sad evening before the death of this noble youth I was with him. No one was there, but his physician, and an intimate friend whom he loved, and whom he had ruined. At my coming in, he said;

You, and the physician, are come too late.—I have neither life, nor hope. You both aim at miracles. You would raise the dead.

Heaven, I said, was merciful.—

Or I could not have been thus guilty. What has it done to bless and to save me?—I have been too strong for Omnipotence! I plucked down ruin!

I said, The blessed Redeemer——

Hold! hold! you wound me!—This is the rock on which I split—I denied his name.

Refusing to hear any thing from me, or take any thing from the physician, he lay silent, as far as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock struck. Then with vehemence;

Oh, time! time! it is fit thou shouldest thus strike thy murderer to the heart.—How art thou fled for ever!—A month!—Oh, for single week! I ask not for years; though an age were too little for the much I have to do.

On my saying, we could not do too much: that heaven was a blessed place—

So much the worse. 'Tis lost! 'tis lost!—Heaven is to me the severest part of hell!

Soon after I proposed prayer.

Pray you that can. I never prayed. I cannot pray—Nor need I. Is not heaven on my side already? It closes with my conscience. Its severest strokes but second my own.

His friend being much touched, even to tears, at this, (who could forbear? I could not,) with a most affectionate look, he said:

Keep those tears for thyself. I have undone thee.——Dost weep for me? That's cruel. What can pain me more?

Here his friend too much affected, would have left him.

No, stay. Thou still mayest hope.——Therefore hear me. How madly have I talked? How madly hast thou listened and believed? But look on my present state, as a full answer to thee, and to myself. This body is all weakness and pain; but my soul, as if strung up by torment to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason; full mighty to suffer. And that which thus triumphs within the jaws of mortality, is doubtless immortal.—And as for a Deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict what I feel.

I was about to congratulate this passive, involuntary, confessor, on his asserting the two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature; when he thus very passionately:

No, no! let me speak on. I have not long to speak—My much injured friend! my soul as my body, lies in ruins; in scattered fragments of broken thought: remorse for the past, throws my thoughts on the future. Worse dread of the future, strikes it back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake; and bless heaven for the flames;—that is not an everlasting flame; that is not an unquenchable fire.

How were we struck! Yet, soon after, still more. With what an eye of distraction, what a face of despair, he cried out:

My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife! And is there another hell?—Oh! thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent, Lord God! Hell itself is a refuge, if it hides me from thy frown.

Soon after his understanding failed. His terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or ever forgot. And ere the sun arose, the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont expired.

Young.

§ 163. *The Majesty and Supremacy of the Scriptures confessed by a Sceptic.*

I will confess to you, that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers with all their pomp of diction: how mean, how contemptible are they compared with the Scripture! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! what profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what subtlety, what truth in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live, and so die, without weakness, and without ostentation? When Plato described his imaginary good man loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ: the resemblance was so striking, that all the Fathers perceived it.

What pre-possession, what blindness must it be to compare the son of Sophronicus to the son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion there is between them? Socrates dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was any thing more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however had before put them in practice; he had only to say therefore what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been just before Socrates defined justice; Leonidas had given up his life for his country before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty; the Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety; before he had even defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only hath given us both precept and example? The greatest wisdom was made known amongst the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people on earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates in receiving the cup of poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating torments, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction: on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition in fact, only shifts the difficulty without obviating it: it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero.

Rousseau.

§ 164. *On Youthful Piety.*

In all situations, indeed, of human life, piety is the duty and the interest of mankind: but in youth, it has something singularly graceful and becoming; something which ever disposes us to think well of the mind in which it is found; and which, better than all the other attainments of life, appears to promise honour and happiness in future days.

It is suited, in the first place, we think, to the opening of human life,—to that interesting season when nature in all its beauty first opens on the view, and when the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty fall on the heart, unmingled and unimpaired. It is suited, in the next place, to the nature of youthful imagination; to that love of excellence and perfection which nothing mortal ever can realize, and which can find only in the truths of religion, the objects of which it is in search. It is suited still more perhaps, to the tenderness of young affections; to that sensibility which every instance of goodness can move; and to that warm and generous temper which meets every where with the objects of its gratitude or love. But, most of all, it is suited, in our opinion, to the *innocence* of the youthful mind, to that sacred and sinless purity which can lift its unpolluted hands to Heaven; which guilt hath not yet torn from confidence and hope in God; and which can look beyond the world to that society of kindred spirits, "of whom is the kingdom of Heaven." The progress of life, we know, may bring other acquisitions: it may strengthen religion, by experience, and add knowledge to faith: but the piety which springs only from the heart,—the devotion which nature, and not reasoning inspires,—the pure homage which flows unbidden from the tongue, and which asks no other notive for its payment than the pleasures which it bestows,—these are the possessions of youth, and of youth alone.

The feelings of piety, however, are not only natural and becoming in youth; they are still more valuable, as tending to the formation of future character; as affording the best and noblest school in which the mind may be trained to whatever is great or good in human nature.

That the convictions of religion form the great foundation of moral conduct,—that piety, in itself, is fitted to exalt the human mind to its greatest degree of virtuous perfection,—are truths which every one acknowledges, and which the experience of mankind sufficiently proves. —But the misfortune is, that, in general, religion is acquired too late in life, to produce all the effects on the mind which it is fitted to have, and when, instead of forming the character, it is itself formed by it. The habits of worldly pursuit have, ere this period occurs, contracted the mind to narrow views, and sordid occupations. The ambition, which once grasped at excellence, and which thought no honours were impossible to be obtained in the conflict of human life, has, ere this, expired under the daily pressure of trivial cares, and the daily demand of unimportant exertions. The testimony of conscience has, long before now, armed the Deity with terror, and extinguished all the fascinating views which immortality affords, in the gloom with which it now is covered. At such a period of life, religion is embraced, rather because it is necessary, than because it is pleasing. It is an occasional, rather than a permanent affection,—which comes rather to console the hours of distress, when every other comfort leaves us, than to influence the general thoughts, and animate the general conduct. To most men, accordingly, the best effects of religion are altogether unknown. It mingles not in their daily pursuits, nor softens their usual duty. It is banished from their thoughts in the days of happiness and tranquillity, and is sought after only when misfortunes press, or diseases alarm. It possesses, therefore, only a negative effect on their conduct or character. It intimidates them, perhaps, from great violations of duty,—but it stimulates them to no positive virtue. It terrifies them by the prospect of punishments,—but it excites them to no ambition of doing well. It is a slavish and a timid service, and not "the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

The piety which is formed in youth has a different character, and leads to very different effects. It springs in the first and purest state of the human mind, when the soul comes fresh from the hands of its Creator, and when no habits of life have contracted the reach of its powers. It comes in that happy season, when life is new, and hope unbroken; when nature seems every where to rejoice around, and when the love of God rises unbidden in the soul. It comes not, then, to terrify or to alarm, but to afford every high and pleasing prospect in which the heart can indulge,—to withdraw the veil which covers the splendours of the eternal mind,—to open that futurity which awakens all their desires to behold, and, in the sublime occupations of which they feel already, as by some secret inspiration, the home and destiny of their souls. At such a period, religion is not a service of necessity, but of joy. It is not an occasional, but a permanent subject of meditation,—a subject which can fill their solitary hours with rapture; which involuntarily occurs to them in every season, when their hearts are disposed to feel; and to which they willingly return from all the disappointments or follies of life, and resume again their unblemished joys.

Alison's Sermons.

§ 165. *On the feelings with which we ought to return from Public Worship.*

Whenever you return, then, my brethren, from the services of religion to the privacy of your homes, return with the sublime expression of the prophet of old upon your minds: "How sacred is this place!" it is the dwelling of God! "it is no other than the gate of Heaven!" There, remember, is the post which has been assigned you, by the Ruler of the Universe;—there, the services which you are summoned to perform, in the cause of humanity;—there, the theatre on which you are to act, in the sight of men and of angels, and to qualify yourselves for higher services, and a sublimer employment.

If it be to the home of Youth you return, when the eyes of friends and of parents meet you in love, remember what you owe to them, and what return you can make for the many anxious hours their hearts have known for you—remember what you owe to that world upon which you are entering, where you must either bestow happiness or sorrow, and where the final issue depends upon the principles you are now acquiring, the knowledge you are gaining, and the habits you are indulging. Remember still more what you owe to Him who called you into being ; who has infused into your minds so many noble capacities for virtue, for wisdom, and for happiness ; and who has set before you the infinity of progressive perfection, to waken them into life and activity.

If it be to the home of Manhood you return, my brethren, consider well what duties it imposes. The years of your youth and your education are past ;—the years of age and of weakness are approaching. Now, therefore, is the season of real virtue, and of strenuous duty,—the noon day of your being, when all your powers are entire, and when the Sun of Righteousness burns above your head, to light you on your way. Beneath your own roof, every honour, and every usefulness of your being await you,—the honours of the master, the husband, the parent, the friend, and the citizen. These are the duties to which the Father of the Universe "sends you away." In confiding them to you, he hath made you no less than "a fellow-worker with himself," in the diffusion of happiness to his creation ; and, in calling you to their discharge, he is qualifying you for some higher service, in a condition of being where virtue is unknown to misfortune, and where death and sin prevail no more.

If it be to the house of Age you are returning, my brethren, where the storms of winter are gathering, and the sun is going low in your sky, there are yet duties which await you, though they are tempered to the failing condition of your being, and suited to the infirmity of your strength. You are come to the evening of your day ;—"its heat and its labours" are passed, and you are called upon to repose in the cool shade of memory and of meditation. It is now you are to review, with unimpassioned eye, the transactions in which you have borne a part,—to instruct the young who surround you, by the long experience you have acquired ; and to teach them, with the wisdom of old, that "to fear God, and to keep His commandments," constitute the whole happiness, as well as the whole duty of man. It is now, when passion has ceased, and the illusions of the world subside, that you are called upon to renew that innocence which life has impaired, to repent those frailties which time may have brought,—and to rekindle, even under the shades of age, that high and holy spirit, which the inspiration of the Almighty breathed into you with the breath of moral life.—Though "the evil days may be come," in which "you have no pleasure in them," they are yet come in mercy, to wean you from a temporary world, to awaken higher hopes, and inspire more elevated feelings ; to call you to put your trust in Him, "who was, and is, and is to come ;—in whose presence there is the fulness of eternal joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

There are, however, my brethren, other varieties in the conditon of human life than those of age, and there are other lessons which we may learn from the words we have been considering. In the situations either of prosperity or of adversity, all men are to be found ; and every one of us, when we return from the services of this place, are returning either to the house of joy, or to the house of mourning. If it be to the first of these you are returning, my brethren,—if the voice of health and joy meet you upon your approach,—if honour, or wealth, or power, are the distinctions of your homes,—enter them, I beseech you, with the solemn reflections which religion inspires. Your dwellings are at present in the sunshine of Heaven, and the richest blessings of present time are given you to bestow. Think, then, how high are the obligations which your prosperity creates!—that you are the stewards of the Universal Parent; and that to you the wretched look up for relief, the injured for protection, the industrious for reward, the virtuous for praise, and the world for example. When you pass the threshold of your gates, ask your own hearts, whether, of those to whom so much is gratuitously given, much will not also be required?—and if thankfulness spring up in your hearts, on the review of your blessings, mingle with it the humble prayer that you may be enabled to use them as becomes those who are permitted to know the will of the God who gave them.

And, ye my afflicted brethren! ye who are to return to the various scenes of the house of mourning,—to meet the struggles of poverty or misfortune,—to watch with throbbing hearts, the bed of sickness, or to bend, in speechless sorrow, over the bed of death,—return, I beseech you, with all the consolations of this doctrine in your souls. Sad as are the homes to which you are going, remember who it is that "sends you away." Remember that your afflictions "rise not from the dust," but descend from the Throne of your Father; that they are ordained for the trial of that faith which may end in joy, and that patience which may lead to glory; that above the shades of present time, there reigneth the Father of Eternal Light; and that the noblest virtues which blossom in eternity, are those which have sprung beneath the tears of adversity. Remember still more, that He who now sitteth on the right hand of God, was only "made perfect by suffering;" that he has led the way before you from earth to Heaven; and that, in calling you to be partakers of his suffering, He calls you also to be partakers of his glory.

Alison's Sermons.

§ 166. *Analogy between the Decay of Nature and of Man.*

There is an even-tide in the day,—an hour when the sun retires, and the shadows fall, and when nature assumes the appearances of soberness and silence. It is an hour from which every where the thoughtless fly, as peopled only in their imagination with images of gloom;—it is the hour, on the other hand, which, in every age, the wise have loved, as bringing with it sentiments and affections more valuable than all the splendours of the day.

Its first impression is to still all the turbulence of thought or passion which the day may have brought forth. We follow, with our eye, the descending sun,—we listen to the decaying sounds of labour and of toil, and when all the fields are silent around us, we feel a kindred stillness to breathe upon our souls, and to calm them from the agitations of society. From this first impression, there is a second which naturally follows it;—in the day we are living with men,—in the even-tide we begin to live with nature;—we see the world withdrawn from us,—the shades of night darken over the habitations of men, and we feel ourselves alone. It is an hour, fitted, as it would seem, by Him who made us, to still, but with gentle hand, the throb of every unruly passion, and the ardour of every impure desire; and, while it veils for a time the world that misleads us, to awaken in our hearts those legitimate affections which the heat of the day may have dissolved. There is yet a farther scene it presents to us:—While the world withdraws from us, and while the shades of the evening darken upon our dwellings, the splendours of the firmament come forward to our view. In the moments when earth is overshadowed, Heaven opens to our eyes the radiance of a sublimer being; our hearts follow the successive splendours of the scene; and while we forget, for a time, the obscurity of earthly concerns, we feel that there are "yet greater things than these," and that we "have a Father who dwelleth in the heavens, and who yet deigneth to consider the things that are upon earth."

There is, in the second place, an "even-tide" in the year,—a season, as we now witness, when the sun withdraws his propitious light,—when the winds arise, and the leaves fall, and nature around us seems to sink into decay. It is said, in general to be the season of melancholy; and if, by this word, be meant that it is the time of solemn and of serious thought, it is undoubtedly the season of melancholy;—yet, it is a melancholy so soothing, so gentle in its approach, and so prophetic in its influence, that they who have known it feel, as instinctively, that it is the doing of God, and that the heart of man is not thus finely touched, but to fine issues.

1. It is a season, in the first place, which tends to wean us from the passions of the world. Every passion, however base or unworthy, is yet eloquent. It speaks to us of present enjoyment;—it tells us of what men have done and what men may do, and it supports us every where by the example of many around us. When we go out into the fields in the evening of the year, a different voice approaches us. We regard, even in spite of ourselves, the still but steady advances of time. A few days ago, and the summer of the year was grateful, and every element was filled with life, and the sun of Heaven seemed to glory in his ascendant. He is now enfeebled in his power; the desert no more "blossoms like the rose;" the song of joy is no more heard among the branches; and the earth is strewed with that foliage which once bespoke the magnificence of summer. Whatever may be the passions which society has awakened, we pause amid this apparent desolation of nature. We sit down in the lodge "of the way-faring man in the wilderness," and we feel that all we witness is the emblem of our own fate. Such also, in a few years, will be our own condition. The blossoms of our spring,—the pride of our summer will also fade into decay;—and the pulse that now beats high with virtuous or with vicious desire, will gradually sink, and then must stop for ever. We rise from our meditations with hearts softened and subdued, and we return into life as into a shadowy scene, where we have "disquieted ourselves in vain."

2. It is the peculiar character of the melancholy which such seasons excite, that it is general. It is not an individual remonstrance;—it is not the harsh language of human wisdom, which too often insults, while it instructs us. When the winds of autumn sigh around us, their voice speaks not to us only, but to our kind; and the lesson they teach us is not that we alone decay, but that such also is the fate of all the generations of man.—"They are the green leaves of the tree of the desert, which perish and are renewed." In such a sentiment there is a kind of sublimity mingled with its melancholy;—our tears fall, but they fall not for ourselves;—and, although the train of our thoughts may have begun with the selfishness of our own concerns, we feel that, by the ministry of some mysterious power, they end in awakening our concern for every being that lives.—Yet a

few years, we think, and all that now bless, or all that now convulse humanity will also have perished. The mightiest pageantry of life will pass,—the loudest notes of triumph or of conquest will be silent in the grave;—the wicked, wherever active, "will cease from troubling," and the weary, wherever suffering, "will be at rest." Under an impression so profound, we feel our own hearts better. The cares, the animosities, the hatreds which society may have engendered, sink unperceived from our bosoms. In the general desolation of nature, we feel the littleness of our own passions;—we look forward to that kindred evening which time must bring to all;—we anticipate the graves of those we hate, as of those we love. Every unkind passion falls, with the leaves that fall around us; and we return slowly to our homes, and to the society which surrounds us, with the wish only, to enlighten or to bless them.

There is an even-tide in human life, a season when the eye becomes dim, and the strength decays, and when the winter of age begins to shed upon the human head its prophetic snow. It is the season of life to which the present is most analogous; and much it becomes, and much it would profit you, my elder brethren, to mark the instructions which the season brings. The spring and the summer of your days are gone, and with them, not only the joys they knew, but many of the friends who gave them. You have entered upon the autumn of your being, and whatever may have been the profusion of your spring, or the warm intemperance of your summer, there is yet a season of stillness and of solitude which the beneficence of Heaven affords you, in which you may meditate upon the past and the future, and prepare yourselves for the mighty change which you are then to undergo.

If it be thus, my elder brethren, you have the wisdom to use the decaying season of nature, it brings with it consolations more valuable than all the enjoyments of former days. In the long retrospect of your journey, you have seen every day the shades of the evening fall, and every year the clouds of winter gather. But you have seen also, every succeeding day, the morning arise in its brightness, and in every succeeding year the spring return to renovate the winter of nature. It is now you may understand the magnificent language of Heaven,—it mingles its voice with that of revelation,—it summons you, in these hours when the leaves fall, and the winter is gathering, to that evening study which the mercy of Heaven has provided in the book of salvation: And, while the shadowy valley opens which leads to the abode of death, it speaks of that hand which can comfort and can save, and which can conduct to those "green pastures, and those still waters," where there is an eternal spring for the children of God.

Alison's Sermons.

§ 167. *Eternity of God.*

We receive such repeated intimations of decay in the world through which we are passing; decline and change and loss, follow decline and change and loss in such rapid succession, that we can almost catch the sound of universal wasting, and hear the work of desolation going on busily around us. "The mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place. The waters wear the stones, the things which grow out of the dust of the earth are washed away, and the hope of man is destroyed." Conscious of our own instability, we look about for something to rest on, but we look in vain. The heavens and the earth had a beginning, and they will have an end. The face of the world is changing daily and hourly. All animated things grow old and die. The rocks crumble, the trees fall, the leaves fade, and the grass withers. The clouds are flying, and the waters are flowing away from us.

The firmest works of man, too, are gradually giving way, the ivy clings to the mouldering tower, the brier hangs out from the shattered window, and the wallflower springs from the disjointed stones. The founders of these perishable works have shared the same fate long ago. If we look back to the days of our ancestors, to the men as well as the dwellings of former times, they become immediately associated in our imaginations, and only make the feeling of instability stronger and deeper than before. In the spacious domes which once held our fathers, the serpent hisses, and the wild bird screams. The halls, which once were crowded with all that taste, and science, and labour could procure, which resounded with melody, and were lighted up with beauty, are buried by their own ruins, mocked by their own desolation. The voice of merriment, and of wailing, the steps of the busy and the idle have ceased in the deserted courts, and the weeds choke the entrances, and the long grass waves upon the hearthstone. The works of art, the forming hand, the tombs, the very ashes they contained, are all gone.

While we thus walk among the ruins of the past, a sad feeling of insecurity comes over us; and that feeling is by no means diminished when we arrive at home. If we turn to our friends, we can hardly speak to them before they bid us farewell. We see them for a few moments, and in a few moments more their countenances are changed, and they are sent away. It matters not how near and dear they are. The ties which bind us together are never too close to be parted, or too strong to be broken. Tears were never known to move the king of terrors, neither is it enough that we are compelled to surrender one, or two, or many of those we love; for though the price is so great, we buy no favour with it, and our hold on those who remain is as slight as ever. The shadows all elude our grasp, and follow one another down the valley. We gain no confidence, then, no feeling of security, by turning to our contemporaries and kindred. We know that the forms, which are breathing around us, are as shortlived and fleeting as those were, which have been dust for centuries. The sensation of vanity, uncertainty, and ruin is equally strong, whether we muse on what has long been prostrate, or gaze on what is falling now, or will fall so soon.

If every thing which comes under our notice has endured for so short a time, and in so short a time will be no more, we cannot say that we receive the least assurance by thinking on ourselves. When they, on whose fate we have been meditating, were engaged in the active scenes of life, as full of health and hope as we are now, what were we? We had no knowledge, no consciousness, no being; there was not a single thing in the wide universe which knew us. And after the same interval shall have elapsed, which now divides their days from ours, what shall we be? What they are now. When a few more friends have left, a few more hopes deceived, and a few more changes mocked us, "we shall be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb: the clods of the valley shall be sweet unto us, and every man shall follow us, as there are innumerable before us." All power will have forsaken the strongest, and the loftiest will be laid low, and every eye will be closed, and every voice hushed, and every heart will have ceased its beating. And when we have gone ourselves, even our memories will not stay behind us long. A few of the near and dear will bear our likeness in their bosoms, till they too have arrived at the end of their journey, and entered the dark dwelling of unconsciousness. In the thoughts of others we shall live only till the last sound of the bell, which informs them of our departure, has ceased to vibrate in their ears. A stone, perhaps, may tell some wanderer where we lie, when we came here, and when we went away; but even that will soon refuse to bear us record: "time's effacing fingers" will be busy on its surface, and at length will wear it smooth; and then the stone itself will sink, or crumble, and the wanderer of another age will pass, without a single call upon his sympathy, over our unheeded graves.

Is there nothing to counteract the sinking of the heart, which must be the effect of observations like these? Is there no substance among all these shadows? If all who live and breathe around us are the creatures of yesterday, and destined to see destruction to-morrow; if the same condition is our own, and the same sentence is written against us; if the solid forms of inanimate nature and laborious art are fading and falling; if we look in vain for durability to the very roots of the mountains, where shall we turn, and on what can we rely? Can no support be offered; can no source of confidence be named? Oh yes! there is one Being to whom we can look with a perfect conviction of finding that security, which nothing about us can give, and which nothing about us can take away. To this Being we can lift up our souls, and on him we may rest them, exclaiming in the language of the monarch of Israel, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." "Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure, yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

The eternity of God is a subject of contemplation, which, at the same time that it overwhelms us with astonishment and awe, affords us an immoveable ground of confidence in the midst of a changing world. All things which surround us, all these dying mouldering inhabitants of time, must have had a Creator, for the plain reason that they could not have created themselves. And their Creator must have existed from all eternity, for the plain reason, that the first cause must necessarily be uncaused. As we cannot suppose a beginning without a cause of existence, that which is the cause of all existence must be self-existent, and could have had no beginning. And, as it had no beginning, so also, as it is beyond the reach of all influence and control, as it is independent and almighty, it will have no end.

Here then is a support, which will never fail; here is a foundation which can never be moved—the everlasting Creator of countless worlds, "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." What a sublime conception! *He inhabits eternity*, occupies this inconceivable duration, pervades and fills throughout this boundless dwelling. Ages on ages before even the dust of which we are formed was created, HE had existed in infinite majesty, and ages on ages will roll away after we have all returned to the dust whence we were taken, and still HE will exist in infinite majesty, living in the eternity of his own nature, reigning in the plenitude of his own omnipotence, for ever sending forth the word, which forms, supports, and governs all things, commanding new created light to shine on new created worlds, and raising up new created generations to inhabit them.

The contemplation of this glorious attribute of God, is fitted to excite in our minds the most animating and consoling reflections. Standing, as we are, amid the ruins of time, and the wrecks of mortality, where every thing about us is created and dependent, proceeding from nothing, and hastening to destruction, we rejoice that something is presented to our view which has stood from everlasting, and will remain for ever. When we have looked on the pleasures of life, and they have vanished away; when we have looked on the works of nature, and perceived that they were changing; on the monuments of art, and seen that they would not stand; on our friends, and they have fled while we were gazing; on ourselves, and felt that we were as fleeting as they; when we have looked on every object to which we could turn our anxious eyes, and they have all told us that they could give us no hope nor support, because they were so feeble themselves; we can look to the throne of God: change and decay have never reached that; the revolution of ages has never moved it; the waves of an eternity have been rushing past it, but it has remained unshaken; the waves of another eternity are rushing toward it, but it is fixed, and can never be disturbed.

And blessed be God, who has assured us by a revelation from himself, that the throne of eternity is likewise a throne of mercy and love; who has permitted and invited us to repose ourselves and our hopes on that which alone is everlasting and unchangeable. We shall shortly finish our allotted time on earth, even if it should be unusually prolonged. We shall leave behind us all which is now familiar and beloved, and a world of other days and other men will be entirely ignorant that once we lived. But the same unalterable Being will still preside over the universe, through all its changes, and from his remembrance we shall never be blotted. We can never be where he is not, nor where he sees and loves and upholds us not. He is our Father and our God for ever. He takes us from earth that he may lead us to Heaven, that he may refine our nature from all its principles of corruption, share with us his own immortality, admit us to his everlasting habitation, and crown us with his eternity.

Greenwood.

§ 168. *Excuses to palliate neglect of Religion.*

First, it is often said, that time is wanted for the duties of religion. The calls of business, the press of occupation, the cares of life, will not suffer me, says one, to give that time to the duties of piety, which otherwise I would gladly bestow. Say you this without a blush? You have no time, then, for the especial service of that great Being, whose goodness alone has drawn out to its present length your cobweb thread of life; whose care alone has continued you in possession of that unseen property, which you call your time. You have no time, then, to devote to that Being, on whose existence the existence of the universe depends; a Being so great, that if his attention could for an instant be diverted, you fall never again to rise; if his promise should fail, your hopes, your expectations vanish into air; if his power should be weakened, man, angel, nature perishes.

But, let me ask, by what right do you involve yourself in this multiplicity of cares? Why do you weave around you this web of occupation, and then complain that you cannot break it? Will you say, that your time is your own, and that you have a right to employ it in the manner you please? Believe me, it is not your own. It belongs to God, to religion, to mankind. You possess not an hour, to which one of these puts not in a preferable claim; and are such claimants to be dismissed without allotting to them a moment?

But for what else can you find no leisure? Do you find none for amusement? Or is amusement itself your occupation? Perhaps pleasure is the pressing business of your life; perhaps pleasure stands waiting to catch your precious moments as they pass. Do you find none for the pursuit of curious and secular knowledge? If you find none, then, for religion, it is perhaps because you wish to find none; it would be, you think, a tasteless occupation, an insipid entertainment.

But this excuse is founded on a most erroneous conception of the nature of religion. It is supposed to be something, which interrupts business, which wastes time, and interferes with all the pleasant and profitable pursuits of life. It is supposed to be something which must be practised apart from every thing else, a distinct profession, a peculiar occupation. The means of religion, meditation, reading, and prayer, will, and ought, indeed, to occupy distinct portions of our time. But religion itself demands not distinct hours. Religion will attend you not as a troublesome, but as a pleasant and useful companion in every proper place, and every temperate occupation of life. It will follow you to the warehouse or to the office: it will retreat with you to the country, it will dwell with you in town; it will cross the seas, or travel over mountains, or remain with you at home. Without your consent, it will not desert you in prosperity, or forget you in adversity. It will grow up with you in youth, and grow old with you in age; it will attend you with peculiar pleasure to the hovels of the poor, or the chamber of the sick; it will retire with you to your closet, and watch by your bed, or walk with you in gladsome union to the house of God; it will follow you beyond the confines of the world, and dwell with you in heaven for ever, as its native residence.

Again, it is said, am I not as good as others? Why is an attention to religion, an unpopular piety, a rigid virtue required of me, which cannot be found in the circle of my acquaintance, or in the world at large? Why am I urged to set up as a reformer, or expose myself to the scorn of mankind? But the majority of men are poor; does this however check the ardour of your pursuit of wealth; or do you avoid a new acquisition, because you fear it will expose you to the envy of your inferiors? The majority of mankind are ignorant; but is ignorance therefore honourable, or is learning contemptible or invidious?

We have now supposed, that piety and unsullied virtue would sometimes be attended with scorn. But even this is an unwarranted supposition. Piety is venerated by the impious. Unyielding virtue is admired by the corrupt; disinterested goodness by the selfish; temperance, chastity, humanity, by the intemperate, unchaste, and ambitious. Consider, too, to what extravagances this excuse would lead. It places you loosely floating on the inconstant tide of popular manners. If this rises, you indeed are raised; if it falls, you descend, however imperceptibly, on its surface. It is an excuse, which might be offered with equal propriety by the corrupt inhabitant of Sodom, as by you.

It is said, religion is dull, unsocial, uncharitable, enthusiastic, a damper of human joy, a morose intruder upon human pleasure. If this were true, nothing could be more incongruous than the parable, which represents it as an entertainment. But if this be the character of religion, it is surely the very reverse of what we should suppose it to be, and the reverse indeed of what it ought to be. Perhaps, in your distorted vision, you have mistaken sobriety for dulness, equanimity for moroseness, disinclination to bad company for aversion to society, abhorrence of vice for uncharitableness, and piety for enthusiasm.

No doubt, at the table of boisterous intemperance, religion, if she were admitted as a guest, would wear a very dull countenance. In a revel of debauchery, and amidst the brisk interchange of profanity and folly, religion might appear indeed a dumb, unsocial intruder, ignorant of the rhetoric of oaths and the ornaments of obscenity. These are scenes, it must be acknowledged, of what is falsely called pleasure, in which religion, if embodied and introduced, would be as unwelcome a guest, as the emblematic coffin, which the Egyptians used to introduce in the midst of their entertainments. From such instances, however, to accuse religion of being unfriendly to the enjoyment of life, is as absurb as to interpret unfavourably the silence of a foreigner, who understands not a word of our language.

But as long as intemperance is not pleasure, as long as profaneness, impurity, or scandal, is not wit, as long as excess is not the perfection of mirth, as long as selfishness is not the surest enjoyment, and as long as gratitude, love, reverence, and resignation are not superstitious affections, so long religion lays not an icy hand on the true joys of life. Without her all other pleasures become tasteless, and at last painful. To explain to you, indeed, how much she exalts, purifies and prolongs the pleasures of sense and imagination, and what peculiar sources of consolation, cheerfulness, and contentment she opens to herself, would lead us at present into too wide a range.

Excuses for irreligion are drawn from the failings and imperfections of christians. There, says the profligate, are your boasted saints. They have their faults, as well as those who make not so great pretensions to piety. Thus it happens, that some remains of imperfection, some constitutional infirmity, some unamiable weakness of good men, is brought forward and exhibited in all the triumph of illiberality to the gaze of a censorious world. The character of the mind is drawn from a single trait, from some casual wrinkle, some unlucky deformity. The point, in which a good man is as frail as others, is selected and contemplated with renewed pleasure, while those points, in which he is superior to other men, are unobserved or unacknowledged. This is partial, unjust, uncharitable, iniquitous.

But the excuse closes not here. Of what religion has failed to remove it is most absurdly called the cause. If apparently devout and pious habits are ever found associated with a temper which is not open as day to melting charity, it is religion which hardens the heart, it is religion which locks the coffers. Wherever passion it has failed to subdue, or whatever fault it has been unable to prevent, it is impiously said to encourage. Equally absurd would it be, to attribute the weakness of a broken bone to the kind attentions of the surgeon, the pain of a wound to the balmy band which would assuage it.

But of all the faults of christians, from which excuses for irreligion are drawn, the occasional extravagances into which pious men have fallen afford the most plausible apologies.

The history of religion is ransacked for instances of persecution, of austerities, and enthusiastic irregularities, and when they are all collected, the cold-hearted, thoughtless irreligionist exclaims, these are the fruits of piety!

But why is it never considered, that the same ardent temperament, the same energy of passions, if they had been united with any other subject, would have rushed into similar extremes? In a mind of such a mould, religion, as is often said, is the occasion only, not the cause of extravagance. When enthusiasm, however, is the result of mere ignorance, as it most commonly is, the excuse entirely fails. Ignorance is not devotion, nor the mother of devotion; zeal is not religion, enthusiasm is not piety, solitude is not purity, spiritual pride is not conscious innocence, and the preternatural heat of the passions is not the warmth of love to God or man.

You would not judge of the usual moisture of any region from the occasional inundation of its rivers. The influence of true religion is mild, and soft, and noiseless, and constant as the descent of the evening dew on the tender herbage, nourishing and refreshing all the amiable and social virtues; but enthusiasm is violent, sudden, rattling as a summer shower, rooting up the fairest flowers, and washing away the richest mould in the pleasant garden of society.

Excuses for a neglect of religion are suggested by different seasons of life. Youth, in the fulness of its spirits, defers it to the sobriety of manhood; manhood, encumbered with cares, defers it to the leisure of old age: old age, weak and hesitating, is unable to enter on an untried mode of life. The excuses of youth are those which are most frequently offered, and most easily admitted. The restrictions of religion, though proper enough for maturer age, are too severe, it is said, for this frolicsome and gladsome period. Its consolations, too, they do not want. Leave them to prop the feeble limbs of old age, or to cheer the sinking spirits of adversity. False and pernicious maxim! As if, at the end of a stated number of years, a man could become religious in a moment! As if the husbandman, at the end of summer, could call up a harvest from the soil which he had never tilled! As if manhood, too, would have no excuses! And what are they? That he has grown too old to amend. That his parents took no pains with his religious education, and therefore his ignorance is not his own fault. That he must be making provision for old age; and the pressure of cares will allow him no time to attend to the evidences, or learn the rules of religion. Thus life is spent in framing apologies, in making and breaking resolutions, and protracting amendment, till death places his cold hand on the mouth open to make its last excuse, and one more is added to the crowded congregation of the dead.

The excuses, which we have already considered, are trifling, however, compared with the following.

It is said, "it is by no means certain, that there is a future state of retribution beyond the limits of the world. Who has ever seen it? It is not certain, that the religion, which you urge us to embrace, comes from God. Many objections may be made to its evidences." Most of the irreligion, which prevails among the more informed classes of society, results from a lurking scepticism, which infests their thoughts, and, in relation to religion, leads them to act in direct opposition to all the maxims, which usually govern the conduct of men.

It is indeed true, that the existence of a future world is not to us as certain as the existence of the present; neither can we ever have that intuitive assurance of the being of a

God, that we necessarily possess of our own existence; neither can the facts of the gospel history, which happened two thousand years ago, be impressed on our belief with that undoubting conviction, which we have of the reality of scenes, which are passing immediately before our eyes.

But the question is not, whether the gospel history can be demonstrated. Few subjects which occupy human contemplation admit strict and mathematical proof. The whole life of man is but a perpetual comparison of evidence, and balancing of probabilities. And upon the supposition that religious truths are only probable, the excuse we have mentioned will not relieve irreligion from the charge of presumptuous and consummate folly.

But it is said, many objections have been made to the evidences of revelation; and many of its difficulties remain yet unexplained. It is true, that objections have been often made and often answered, and not only answered, but refuted. But some difficulties, it is said, yet remain. It is true, they do remain; and the excuse shall be admitted, when any other subject of equal importance shall be produced, in which difficulties do not remain. The most plausible objections, which have been made to any truth within the circle of human knowledge, are those which have been offered against the existence of a material world; but did this ever check an operation in mechanics, or excuse from his daily task a single labourer?

A man of ingenuity might offer a thousand objections against the probability of your living till the morrow, but would this rob you of a moment's rest, or frustrate a single plan, which you had meditated for the approaching day? If we subtract from the difficulties, which attend revelation, those which have been erected by the injudicious zeal of some of its friends in attempting to prove too much, we shall find, that, in the vast storehouse of facts which history presents, for none can there be produced a greater mass of evidence than for the birth, the death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—and upon the supposition of their truth, irreligion is nothing better than distraction.

Another excuse, however, is offered, which perhaps has greater secret influence in quieting the conscience than any other. We are desired to look at the list of great names, who have been adversaries of christianity. Can that evidence, it is asked, be satisfactory, which failed to convince such minds as these?—If the probable truth of revelation is to be ascertained in this manner, the dispute will soon be at an end; for it would be no difficult task to produce, from among the friends of revelation, a greater number of greater names within the last hundred years, than all the hosts of infidelity can furnish in eighteen centuries since the birth of Christ.

But I believe these instances are not alleged to disprove the truth, but only to weaken the importance of christianity. They are alleged only to excuse an inattention to religion, and show that it is not very dangerous to err with such great names on our side. Truths, it is said, which such understandings disbelieved, surely cannot be of infinite importance. Nothing would tend more to remove such apologies, than a fair, impartial, and full account of the education, the characters, the intellectual processes, and the dying moments of such men. Then it would be seen, that their virtues were the result of the very principles they had assailed, but from whose influence they were unable wholly to escape. Then it would be seen, that they had gained by their scepticism no new pleasures, no tranquillity of mind, no peace of conscience during life, and no consolation in the hour of death.

Such are the excuses which irreligion offers. Could you have believed, that they were so empty, so unworthy, so hollow, so absurd? And shall such excuses be offered to the God of heaven and earth? By such apologies shall man insult his Creator? Shall he hope to flatter the ear of Omnipotence, and beguile the observation of an omniscient spirit? Think you, that such excuses will gain new importance in their ascent to the throne of the Majesty on high? Will you trust the interests of eternity in the hands of these superficial advocates?

You have pleaded your incessant occupation. Exhibit then the result of your employment. Have you nothing to produce but these bags of gold, these palaces, and farms, these bundles of cares, and heaps of vexations? Is the eye of Heaven to be dazzled by an exhibition of property, an ostentatious show of treasures? You surely produce not all these wasted hours, to prove that you have had no time for religion. It is an insult to the Majesty of Heaven. Again, you have pleaded your youth, and you have pleaded your age. Which of these do you choose to maintain at the bar of Heaven? Such trifling would not be admitted in the intercourse of men, and do you think it will avail more with Almighty God?

It must however be acknowledged, that the case of the irreligious is not desperate, while excuses are thought proper and necessary. There is some glimmering of hope, that the man who apologizes is willing to amend. God preserve us from that obduracy of wickedness, which disdains to palliate a crime; from that hardihood of unbelief, which will not give even a weak reason, and which derides the offer of an excuse. But the season of apologies is passing away. All our eloquent defences of ourselves must soon cease. Death stiffens the smooth tongue of flattery, and blots out with one stroke, all the ingenious excuses which we have spent our lives in framing.

At the marriage-supper, the places of those who refused to come, were soon filled by a multitude of delighted guests. The God of Heaven needs not our presence to adorn his table, for whether we accept, or whether we reject his gracious invitation, whether those who were bidden taste or not of his supper, his house shall be filled. Though many are called and few chosen, yet Christ has not died in vain, religion is not without its witnesses, or heaven without its inhabitants. Let us then remember, that one thing is needful, and that there is a better part than all the pleasures and selfish pursuits of this world, a part which we are encouraged to secure, and which can never be taken away.

Buckminster.

§ 169. *The Christian Faith.*

It is a common artifice, of those who wish to depreciate the value of this essential principle of a christian's life, to represent faith as something opposed to reason. So far is this from being true, that faith is, in fact, the most reasonable thing in the world; and, wherever religion is not concerned, the universal practice of mankind evinces, that such a principle is indispensable to the most common exercise of the understanding, and to the daily conduct of life. Faith is reasonable, because it is the involuntary homage which the mind pays to the preponderance of evidence. Faith, that is not founded on testimony, is no longer faith.

And as it is *sufficient evidence* only, on which a rational faith can be supported, so if the whole of this evidence is intelligibly presented to a sound understanding, it will not fail to command belief. An eye, not affected by disease, easily distinguishes colours; and we unavoidably believe the existence of the objects within the sphere of its vision. Now the laws of moral probability are just as sure as the laws of vision. That the same exhibition of facts, or the same process of reasoning, does not produce equal conviction on different minds, is not more surprising than that the same glasses will not make objects equally distinct to eyes differently effected. But to conclude, from this variety of effect, that the objects presented do not exist, or that the laws of vision are ill-founded and absurd, would be no more unreasonable than to assume the folly of religious faith, or to doubt the rational conviction of a pious and impartial inquirer, merely because the whole world are not believers.

We cannot wonder, that the evidences, on which our christian faith is built, do not produce universal conviction, when we remember, that this is a religion, which contradicts many of the selfish propensities of the heart, and is at war with all the lusts to which we are habitually enslaved. It is a religion which condemns many of our habits, and requires us to moderate our growing attachment to a world we cannot bear to leave; a religion, which often opposes our passions, which shows us the folly of our fondest expectations, which alarms our sleeping fears, undervalues the objects of our estimation, requires the surrender of our prejudices, and makes it necessary for us to be in readiness to yield up even our comforts and our life.

Astonishing would it be, indeed, if a system like this should command universal belief, if prejudice should have nothing to object, captiousness nothing to cavil at, and indifference no excuses. Astonishing, indeed, would it be, if the evidences of such a revelation should be received, with equal facility, by the worldly and the spiritual, the careless and the inquisitive, the proud and the humble, the ambitious and the unaspiring, the man immersed in pleasure and dissipation, and the man who has been long disciplined in the school of disappointment and affliction.

Neither is religious faith unreasonable, because it includes miraculous events, nor because it embraces a series of truths, which no individual reason could have ascertained, or of which it may not, even now, see the necessity. It is on this account, however, that we so often hear faith opposed to reason; but, on the same principle, faith in any extraordinary occurrence would be opposed to reason.

The only objection to the credibility of miracles is, that they are contrary to general experience; for to say, that they are contrary to universal experience, is to assume the very fact in question. Because they are supernatural, no testimony, it is maintained, can make it reasonable to believe them. This would not be just, even if the miracles which religious faith embraces were separate, insulated facts, which had no connexions with any other interesting truths; much less when they make part of a grand system, altogether worthy the interposition of God to establish.

The extraordinary nature of miraculous facts, considered by themselves, is, it is true, a presumption against them, but a presumption, which sufficient testimony ought as fairly to remove, as it does remove the previous improbability of ordinary facts, not supernatural. A man, born, and living within the tropics, who had never seen water congealed, would no doubt think it a very strange story, if a traveller from the north should assure him, that the same substance, which he had always seen liquid, was every year in other countries, converted into a solid mass capable of sustaining the greatest weights.

What could more decisively contradict all the experience of the tropical inhabitant, and even the experience of those with whom he had always been connected? Yet should we not think it very unreasonable, if he should, in this case, persist in discrediting the testimony even of a single man, whose veracity he had no reason to suspect, and much more, if he should persist in opposition to the concurrent and continually increasing testimony of numbers? Let this be an illustration of the reasonableness of your faith in miracles.

As it respects the credibility of revelation, you have this alternative. Will you believe that the pure system of christian faith, which appeared eighteen hundred years ago, in one of the obscurest regions of the Roman empire, at the moment of the highest mental cultivation and of the lowest moral degeneracy, which superseded at once all the curious fabrics of pagan philosophy, which spread almost instantaneously through the civilized world in opposition to the prejudices, the pride, and the persecution of the times, which has already had the most beneficial influence on society, and been the source of almost all the melioration of the human character, and which is now the chief support of the harmony, the domestic happiness, the morals and the intellectual improvement of the best part of the world—will you believe, I say, that this system originated in the unaided reflections of twelve Jewish fishermen on the sea of Galilee, with the son of a carpenter at their head? Or will you admit a supposition, which solves all the wonders of this case, which accounts at once for the perfection of the system, and the miracle of its propagation,—that Jesus was, as he professed to be, the prophet of God, and that his apostles were, as they declared, empowered to perform the miracles, which subdued the incredulity of the world.

I appeal to you, ye departed masters of pagan wisdom, Plato, Socrates, Cicero, which of these alter tives is the most rational, the m worthy of a philosophical assent? Your systems have passed away, like the light clouds, which chase one another over the hemisphere; but the gospel of Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness, pursues its equal and luminous career, uninterrupted and unobscured. Surely, if a miracle of the New Testament is incredible, what will you say of the enormous faith of a man, who believes in that monster of improbability, which we have described, the simply human origin and progress of christianity?

The value of christian faith may be estimated from the consolations it affords.

Who would look back upon the history of the world with the eye of incredulity, after having once read it with the eye of faith? To the man of faith it is the story of God's operations. To the unbeliever it is only the record of the strange sports of a race of agents, as uncontrolled as they are unaccountable. To the man of faith every portion of history is part of a vast plan, conceived ages ago, in the mind of Omnipotence, which has been fitted precisely to the period it was intended to occupy. The whole series of events forms a magnificent and symmetrical fabric to the eye of pious contemplation; and though the dome be in the clouds, and the top, from its loftiness, be indiscernible to mortal vision, yet the foundations are so deep and solid, that we are sure they are intended to support something permanent and grand.

To the sceptic all the events of all the ages of the world are but a scattered crowd of useless and indigested materials. In his mind all is darkness, all is incomprehensible. The light of prophecy illuminates not to him the obscurity of ancient annals. He sees in them neither design nor operation, neither tendencies nor conclusions. To him the wonderful knowledge of one people is just as interesting, as the desperate ignorance of another. In the deliverance, which God has sometimes wrought for the oppressed, he see nothing but the fact; and in the oppression and decline of haughty empires, nothing but the common accidents of national fortune. Going about to account for events, according to what he calls general laws, he never for a moment considers, that all laws, whether physical, political, or moral, imply a legislator, and are contrived to serve some purpose. Because he cannot always, by his short-sighted vision, discover the tendencies of the mighty events, of which this earth has been the theatre, he looks on the drama of existence around him as proceeding without a plan. Is that principle, then, of no importance, which raises man above what his eyes see, or his ears hear, or his touch feels, at present, and shows him the vast chain of human events, fastened eternally to the throne of God, and returning, after embracing the universe, again to link itself to the footstool of Omnipotence?

Would you know the value of this principle of faith to the bereaved? Go, and follow a corpse to the grave. See the body deposited there, and hear the earth thrown in upon all that remains of your friend. Return now, if you will, and brood over the lesson which your senses have given you, and derive from it what consolation you can. You have learned nothing but an unconsoling fact. No voice of comfort issues from the tomb. All is still there, and blank and lifeless, and has been so for ages.

You see nothing but bodies dissolving and successively mingling with the clods which cover them, the grass groweth over the spot, and the trees waving in sullen majesty over this region of eternal silence. And what is there more! Nothing?—Come, faith, and people these deserts! Come and reanimate these regions of forgetfulness! Mothers! take again your children to your arms, for they are living. Sons! your aged parents are coming forth in the vigour of regenerated years. Friends! behold your dearest connexions are waiting to embrace you. The tombs are burst. Generations, long since lost in slumbers, are awaking. They are coming from the east and the west, from the north and from the south, to constitute the community of the blessed.

But it is not in the loss of friends alone that faith furnishes consolations, which are inestimable. With a man of faith not an affliction is lost, not a change is unimproved. He studies even his own history with pleasure, and finds it full of instruction. The dark passages of his life are illuminated with hope: and he sees, that, although he has passed through many dreary defiles, yet they have opened at last into brighter regions of existence. He recalls, with a species of wondering gratitude, periods of his life, when all its events seemed to conspire against him. Hemmed in by straitened circumstances, wearied with repeated blows of unexpected misfortune, and exhausted with the painful anticipation of more, he recollects years, when the ordinary love of life could not have retained him in the world. Many a time he might have wished to lay down his being in disgust, had not something more than the senses provide us with, kept up the elasticity of his mind. He yet lives, and has found that light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

The man of faith discovers some gracious purpose in every combination of circumstances. Wherever he finds himself, he knows that he has a destination—he has, therefore, a duty. Every event has, in his eye, a tendency and an aim. Nothing is accidental, nothing without a purpose, nothing unattended with benevolent consequences. Every thing on earth is probationary, nothing ultimate. He is poor—perhaps his plans have been defeated—he finds it difficult to provide for the exigencies of life—sickness is permitted to invade the quiet of his household—long confinement imprisons his activity, and cuts short the exertions, on which so many depend—something apparently unlucky mars his best plans—new failures and embarrassments among his friends present themselves and throw additional obstructions in his way—the world look on, and say, all these things are against him.

Some wait coolly for the hour, when he shall sink under the complicated embarrassments of his cruel fortune. Others, of a kinder spirit, regard him with compassion, and wonder how he can sustain such a variety of wo. A few there are, a very few I fear, who can understand something of the serenity of his mind, and comprehend something of the nature of his fortitude. There are those, whose sympathetic piety can read and interpret the characters of resignation on his brow. There are those, in fine, who have felt the influence of faith.

In this influence there is nothing mysterious, nothing romantic, nothing of which the highest reason may be ashamed. It shows the christian his God, in all the mild majesty of his parental character. It shows you God, disposing in still and benevolent wisdom the events of every individual's life, pressing the pious spirit with the weight of calamity to increase the elasticity of the mind, producing characters of unexpected worth by unexpected misfortune, invigorating certain virtues by peculiar probations, thus breaking the fetters which bind us to temporal things, and

> From seeming evil still educing good,
> And better thence again, and better still,
> In infinite progression.

When the sun of the believer's hopes, according to common calculations, is set, to the eye of faith it is still visible. When much of the rest of the world is in darkness, the high ground of faith is illuminated with the brightness of religious consolation.

Come, now, my incredulous friends, and follow me to the bed of the dying believer. Would you see, in what peace a christian can die? Watch the last gleams of thought, which stream from his dying eyes. Do you see any thing like apprehension? The world, it is true, begins to shut in. The shadows of evening collect around his senses. A dark mist thickens and rests upon the objects which have hitherto engaged his observation. The countenances of his friends become more and more indistinct. The sweet expressions of love and friendship are no longer intelligible. His ear wakes no more at the well known voice of his children, and the soothing accents of tender affection die away, unheard, upon his decaying senses. To him the spectacle of human life is drawing to its close, and the curtain is descending, which shuts out this earth, its actors, and its scenes. He is no longer interested in all that is done under the sun. O! that I could now open to you the recesses of his soul; that I could reveal to you the light which darts into the chambers of his understanding. He approaches the world, which he has so long seen in faith. The imagination now collects its diminished strength, and the eye of faith opens wide.

Friends! do not stand, thus fixed in sorrow, around this bed of death. Why are you so still and silent? Fear not to move—you cannot disturb the last visions, which entrance this holy spirit. Your lamentations break not in upon the songs of seraphs, which enwrap his hearing in ecstasy. Crowd, if you choose, around his couch—he heeds you not—already he sees the spirits of the just advancing together to receive a kindred soul. Press him not with importunities; urge him not with alleviations. Think you he wants now these tones of mortal voices—these material, these gross consolations? No! He is going to add another to the myriads of the just, that are every moment crowding into the portals of heaven!

He is entering on a nobler life. He leaves you—he leaves *you*, weeping children of mortality, to grope about a little longer among the miseries and sensualities of a worldly life. Already he cries to you from the regions of bliss. Will you not join him there? Will you not taste the sublime joys of faith? There are your predecessors in virtue; there, too, are places left for your contemporaries. There are seats for you in the assembly of the just made perfect, in the innumerable company of angels, where is Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and God, the judge of all.

Buckminster.

§ 170. *On Daily Prayer.*

The scriptures of the Old and New Testaments agree in enjoining prayer. Let no man call himself a christian, who lives without giving a part of life to this duty. We are not taught how often we must pray; but our Lord in teaching us to say, "Give us *this day* our daily bread," implies that we should pray daily. As to the particular hours to be given to this duty, every christian may choose them for himself. Our religion is too liberal and spiritual to bind us to any place or any hour of prayer. But there are parts of the day particularly favourable to this duty, and which, if possible, should be redeemed for it.

The *first* of these periods is the *morning*, which even nature seems to have pointed out to men of different religions, as a fit time for offerings to the Divinity. In the morning our minds are not so much shaken by worldly cares and pleasures, as in other parts of the day. Retirement and sleep have helped to allay the violence of our feelings, to calm the feverish excitement so often produced by intercourse with men. The hour is a still one. The hurry and tumults of life are not begun, and we naturally share in the tranquillity around us. Having for so many hours lost our hold on the world, we can banish it more easily from the mind, and worship with less divided attention. This, then, is a favourable time for approaching the invisible Author of our being, for strengthening the intimacy of our minds with him, for thinking upon a future life, and for seeking those spiritual aids which we need in the labours and temptations of every day.

In the morning there is much to feed the spirit of devotion. It offers an abundance of thoughts, friendly to pious feeling. When we look on creation, what a happy and touching change do we witness! A few hours past, the earth was wrapt in gloom and silence. There seemed "a pause in nature." But now, a new flood of light has broken forth, and creation rises before us in fresher and brighter hues, and seems to rejoice as if it had just received birth from its Author.

The sun never sheds more cheerful beams, and never proclaims more loudly God's glory and goodness, than when he returns after the coldness and dampness of night, and awakens man and inferior animals to the various purposes of their being. A spirit of joy seems breathed over the earth and through the sky. It requires little effort of imagination to read delight in the kindred clouds, or in the fields bright with dew. This is the time, when we can best feel and bless the Power which said, "let there be light;" which "set a tabernacle for the sun in the heavens," and made him the dispenser of fruitfulness and enjoyment through all regions.

If we next look at ourselves, what materials does the morning furnish for devout thought! At the close of the past day, we were exhausted by our labours, and unable to move without wearisome effort. Our minds were sluggish, and could not be held to the most interesting objects. From this state of exhaustion, we sunk gradually into entire insensibility. Our limbs became motionless; our senses were shut as in death. Our thoughts were suspended, or only wandered confusedly and without aim. Our friends, and the universe, and God himself were forgotten.

And what a change does the morning bring with it! On waking we find, that sleep, the image of death, has silently infused into us a new life. The weary limbs are braced again. The dim eye has become bright and piercing. The mind is returned from the region of forgetfulness to its old possessions. Friends are met again with a new interest. We are again capable of devout sentiment, virtuous effort, and Christian hope. With what subjects of gratitude, then, does the morning furnish us? We can hardly recall the state of insensibility from which we are just emerged, without a consciousness of our dependence, or think of the renovation of our powers and intellectual being, without feeling our obligation to God.

There is something very touching in the consideration, if we will fix our minds upon it, that God thought of us when *we* could not think; that he watched over us when we had no power to avert peril from ourselves; that he continued our vital motions, and in due time broke the chains of sleep, and set our imprisoned faculties free. How fit is it, at this hour, to raise to God the eyes which he has opened, and the arm which he has strengthened; to acknowledge his providence; to consecrate to him the powers he has renewed! How fit that he should be the first object of the thoughts and affections which he has restored! How fit to employ in his praise the tongue he has loosed, and the breath which he has spared!

But the morning is a fit time for devotion, not only from its relation to the past night, but considered as the introduction of a new day. To a thinking mind, how natural at this hour are such reflections as the following:—I am now to enter on a new period of my life, to start afresh in my course. I am to return to that world, where I have often gone astray; to receive impressions which may never be effaced; to perform actions which will never be forgotten; to strengthen a character, which will fit me for heaven or hell. I am this day to meet temptations which have often subdued me; I am to be intrusted again with opportunities of usefulness, which I have often neglected. I am to influence the minds of others, to help in moulding their characters, and in deciding the happiness of their present and future life. How uncertain is this day! What unseen dangers are before me! What unexpected changes may await me! It may be my last day! It will certainly bring me nearer to death and judgment!

Now, when entering on a period of life so important, yet so uncertain, how fit and natural is it, before we take the first step, to seek the favour of that Being on whom the lot of every day depends; to commit all our interests to his almighty and wise providence; to seek his blessing on our labours, and his succour in temptation; and to consecrate to his service the day which he raises upon us! This morning devotion, not only agrees with the sentiments of the heart, but tends to make the day happy, useful, and virtuous. Having cast ourselves on the mercy and protection of the Almighty, we shall go forth with new confidence to the labours and duties which he imposes. Our early prayer will help to shed an odour of piety through the whole life. God, having first occupied, will more easily recur to our mind. Our first step will be in the right path, and we may hope a happy issue.

So fit and useful is morning devotion, it ought not to be omitted without necessity. If our circumstances will allow the privilege, it is a bad sign, when no part of the morning is spent in prayer. If God finds no place in our minds at that early and peaceful hour, he will hardly recur to us in the tumults of life. If the benefits of the morning do not soften us, we can hardly expect the heart to melt with gratitude through the day. If the world then rush in, and take possession of us, when we are at some distance and have had a respite from its cares, how can we hope to shake it off, when we shall be in the midst of it, pressed and agitated by it on every side?

Let a part of the morning, if possible, be set apart to devotion; and to this end we should fix the hour of rising, so that we may have an early hour at our own disposal. Our piety is suspicious, if we can renounce, as too many do, the pleasures and benefits of early prayer, rather than forego the senseless indulgence of unnecessary sleep. What! we can rise early enough for business. We can even anticipate the dawn, if a favourite pleasure or an uncommon gain requires the effort. But we cannot rise, that we may bless our great Benefactor, that we may arm ourselves for the severe conflicts to which our principles are to be exposed. We are willing to rush into the world, without thanks offered, or a blessing sought. From a day thus begun, what ought we to expect but thoughtlessness and guilt!

Let us now consider *another* part of the day which is favourable to the duty of prayer; we mean the *evening*. This season, like the morning, is calm and quiet. Our labours are ended. The bustle of life is gone by. The distracting glare of the day has vanished. The darkness which surrounds us favours seriousness, composure, and solemnity. At night the earth fades from our sight, and nothing of creation is left us but the starry heavens, so vast, so magnificent, so serene, as if to guide up our thoughts above all earthly things to God and immortality.

This period should in part be given to prayer, as it furnishes a variety of devotional topics and excitements. The evening is the close of an important division of time, and is therefore a fit and natural season for stopping and looking back on the day. And can we ever look back on a day which bears no witness to God, and lays no claim to our gratitude? Who is it that strengthens us for daily labour, gives us daily bread, continues our friends and common pleasures, and grants us the privilege of retiring, after the cares of the day, to a quiet and beloved home?

The review of the day will often suggest not only these ordinary benefits, but peculiar proofs of God's goodness, unlooked for successes, singular concurrences of favourable events, singular blessings sent to our friends, or new and powerful aids to our own virtue, which call for peculiar thankfulness. And shall all these benefits pass away unnoticed? Shall we retire to repose as insensible as the wearied brute? How fit and natural is it, to close with pious acknowledgment, the day which has been filled with divine beneficence!

But the evening is the time to review not only our blessings, but our actions. A reflecting mind will naturally remember at this hour that another day is gone, and gone to testify of us to our judge. How natural and useful to inquire, what report it has carried to heaven! Perhaps we have the satisfaction of looking back on a day, which in its general tenor has been innocent and pure, which, having begun with God's praise, has been spent as in his presence; which has proved the reality of our principles in temptation: and shall such a day end without gratefully acknowledging Him in whose strength we have been strong, and to whom we owe the powers and opportunities of christian improvement?

But no day will present to us recollections of purity unmixed with sin. Conscience, if suffered to inspect faithfully and speak plainly, will recount irregular desires, and defective motives, talents wasted and time mispent; and shall we let the day pass from us without penitently confessing our offences to Him who has witnessed them, and who has promised pardon to true repentance? Shall we retire to rest with a burden of unlamented and unforgiven guilt upon our consciences? Shall we leave these stains to spread over and sink into the soul?

A religious recollection of our lives is one of the chief instruments of piety. If possible, no day should end without it. If we take no account of our sins on the day on which they are committed, can we hope that they will recur to us at a more distant period, that we shall watch against them to-morrow, or that we shall gain the strength to resist them which we will not implore?

The evening is a fit time for prayer, not only as it ends the day, but as it immediately precedes the period of repose. The hour of activity having passed, we are soon to sink into insensibility and sleep. How fit that we resign ourselves to the care of that Being who never sleeps, to whom the darkness is as the light, and whose providence is our only safety! How fit to entreat him that he would keep us to another day; or, if our bed should prove our grave, that he would give us a part in the resurrection of the just, and awake us to a purer and immortal life! Let our prayers, like the ancient sacrifices, ascend morning and evening. Let our days begin and end with God.

Channing.

§ 171. *On the Government of the Thoughts.*

It is necessary that our thoughts should be under regular discipline, in order to the full and successful exertion of our mental powers. What is called a vigorous and active mind seems, after all, to mean only a mind, of which the thoughts are all subjected to the authority of its governing powers, and may therefore all be brought to bear, with their whole force, on the business in which it is occupied. Attention seems only another name for that state of mind, when all its thoughts are fixed and collected, and bent to a single point; and it is a power of attention, much more than any original and native diversity of talents, which constitutes the intellectual difference among men. Newton was accustomed to declare, that if he differed from his fellow men, he owed it to his power of patient meditation; in other words to his power of fixing his thoughts intently and long on any subject with which he was occupied. We must have all observed the truth of these remarks in the course of our various pursuits. If we examine our minds at those periods when they are most vigorously and successfully exerted, we shall observe that all other objects are excluded from our minds, and that our thoughts are concentrated and engrossed by the task in which we are employed. If on the contrary we observe ourselves when our minds are indisposed, reluctant and inefficient, we shall find that our dominion over our thoughts is lost, that attention is dissipated and distracted by a multitude of unrelated images, which float through the fancy, and that all our powers are weakened, because discordant and divided. The effect of suffering our thoughts to wander without guidance and without object is too obvious to have escaped the most careless observer. It breaks up all our habits of regular inquiry, indisposes us for any thing which requires seriousness and patience, and especially unfits us for meditation on divine things, which from their nature the mind is with so much difficulty brought steadily to contemplate. If then we desire to effect any thing valuable in this short life; if we seek to use our talents according to the purposes of the Giver; if we would improve our own minds for the service of God, and the scenes of eternity; and contribute what we can, to the happiness and improvement of our fellow men, we must learn to control our thoughts, restrain our vain and wandering imaginations, and seek to make the proper business of life in our various callings, and the duties of devotion at their appointed seasons, fill and occupy our minds.

That our thoughts should be brought under discipline, is necessary, in the second place, for our happiness in actual life, and to fit us for its common scenes and duties. A great deal of misery is produced, particularly among those, who have no absorbing occupation, and those in whom the illusions of youth have not been corrected by the experience of actual life, by indulging the imagination in forming schemes and hopes of visionary felicity; or as it is sometimes called, "building castles in the air." It is indeed very delightful to give the reins to the thoughts, to send fancy on the wing from this world of imperfection and pain, and sorrow and sin, to scenes where every thing is perfect, happy, and fair; where nature wears an eternal bloom, where the skies are always blue, and the winds always balmy; where children are always virtuous, friends never faithless, and fortune is never fickle; where the eye knows no tear, and the heart no pang.

But this is not life as we must expect to find it. This is not the world in which we are to live, and in which we are to act. It is not intended that this state of trial should ever realize such dreams of fancy. And the effects of indulging this luxury of vain imagination are neither salutary nor innocent. If we could descend, indeed, from these airy fabrics of unreal felicity, and return as before to the common duties of life, the harshest epithet which we could apply to this employment would be, that it was useless. But both our happiness and our fitness for our duties are lessened by it. When we awake from these delusions, we feel the full force of the contrast between what we see and what we have imagined. The scenes and duties of common life appear tame and insipid, after gazing on the beautiful creations of fancy. The effects on the mind are precisely similar to those produced by works of fiction, except that in this case we read merely the fiction of another, and in that, we make the romance for ourselves; and are therefore more in danger of mistaking it for reality. The realities of life must always fall far short of the pictures of fancy. When we descend from the lofty regions where in imagination we have been dwelling, and are called on to perform the common-place duties of good husbands and wives, and fathers, and children, and citizens, which of course can very seldom call us to feel much either of rapture or of anguish, we miss the strong stimulus to which our passions have been accustomed. We find that we have been nourishing a sickly and fastidious delicacy, which revolts at the plain and homely, and sometimes coarse and disgusting employments, to which we are destined. A spirit of discontent and unhappiness is apt to spring up. We lose our cheerful acquiescence in the purposes of Providence, and our ready submission to that wisdom which always decides best for us.

I do not say that this is always the effect of any degree of indulgence of these vain thoughts, but it is the tendency of it, and therefore it is that we must seek to banish them. We must refuse ourselves the luxury of solitary musing, and building castles in the air, and let hope and fancy and memory be regulated by reason and religion. Our expectations from life must become accommodated to its true state. We must be contented with the mixture of good and evil as it has been mingled for us, and not expect that we are born, with a peculiar destiny, to a happiness and perfection which is denied to others. If indeed it were nothing more than an unprofitable waste of time, that alone would be reason enough to confine this dissipation of thought, and restrain its irregularities. Enough surely of life is spent unprofitably, without giving any of the little, which remains, to the delusions of visionary happiness.

But the necessity of regulating our thoughts will appear more serious, when we consider their influence on our moral character. All action has its origin in the mind. The thought is the rudiment of the deed. Meditation produces desire, and desire leads to practice. If then we would have our actions right, we must make our thoughts pure, and learn to forbear to think on what we are forbidden to do.

The manner in which evil thoughts are connected with bad actions is obvious. There is no one, who is yet innocent, who is not shocked by the idea of crimes, when they appear in all their magnitude and deformity. No one ever leaped over the limits of virtue, into the confines of confirmed vice, at a single bound. On the contrary, the exclamation, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing," is the natural impulse of every man's mind, whose conscience is yet unseared, at the very suggestion of atrocious guilt. But by revolving with pleasure the safety, facility, or advantages, of a wicked deed, he finds his constancy waver, his resolution relax, his detestation soften. The idea of some fraudulent stratagem or scene of guilty pleasure, which at first perhaps was admitted into the mind from curiosity merely, is next regarded with complacency; comes at length to be cherished with fondness; at last assumes the form of desire; and how nearly allied is desire to transgression, there are too many of us, alas, who know! What we allow ourselves to wish, we are soon induced to attempt to gain. He who suffers his thoughts and wishes to dwell too long on the pleasures and advantages which he should derive from what another possesses, will begin to reconcile his mind to some unlawful measure for procuring it. He, who suffers his imagination to be filled with images of guilty and degrading pleasure, will at length find his desire irresistibly stimulated to gratification. Every moment spent in meditation on sin increases its dangerous power over us, till at length the idea of pleasure overcomes the sense of guilt; the last limit of innocence is, though perhaps timidly and reluctantly, past—we enter into the confines of sin—it may be never to return.

We are thus irresistibly led to the conclusion, that he who would govern his actions by the laws of virtue, must regulate his thoughts by those of reason and religion. It is not possible that a man should walk outwardly in the law of God, who is constantly feeding his imagination with the pleasures of sin. The passions will at last act. It is difficult to stop when we have inflamed ourselves with every possible incentive to advance; to abstain when appetite is sharpened to its keenest edge. Of what therefore we are forbidden to do, we must learn to forbid ourselves to think; and make the propriety of action a test of the propriety of thought. If it is wrong to gratify revenge, it is wrong to dwell on it in imagination. If we must resist the allurements of pleasure, we must refuse to contemplate them. We must not seek to indemnify ourselves for the restraints which we impose on our actions, by the sinful indulgences of imagination. There must be no discordance between the inward and outward man; thought, word, and deed, must be constantly and inseparably united.

Thacher.

§ 172. *Practical influence of the study of Moral Science.*

Having spoken of the *necessity* and *objects* of moral philosophy, we proceed to notice some circumstances of its *practical influence.* And here we would observe, that although knowledge is not virtue, yet to enlighten the conscience is in itself an important means of improving the heart. Wrong actions, even with a good intention, have an effect beyond the immediate evil they produce, dangerous to the virtue not only of the agent, but of others. He, who thinks persecution or cruelty, his duty, cannot practise them, without having his bad passions called forth, and his heart hardened. Every error in conduct, as well as speculation, carries him further from virtue and truth, and he is less likely at each step, to act rightly or think correctly. Degrading prejudices or narrow views are sometimes so mingled with the best dispositions, that the natural tendencies of virtue are checked, its beauty tarnished, and influence perverted; while as the views are corrected and enlarged, its efforts are facilitated, its charms acknowledged, and its example commanding.

But is there not in these studies a direct tendency not merely to enlighten the conscience, but to form and cherish that moral sensibility, which is at once the prompt inspirer and jealous guardian of virtue? The first influence of this kind, we shall notice, is upon those engaged in such inquiries. Truths which are frequently presented to the mind, can hardly fail, imperceptibly perhaps, to produce some effect upon it. But when these truths are the subjects of personal speculation, when their character, relations and practical consequences are the constant topics of study and interest, this effect must be greatly increased.

A disposition to consider our own pursuits and discoveries as all important to society, and sometimes to make the most incongruous application of them, has often given just occasion to the wit of the satirist. The poem is well enough, said the mathematican; but I do not see, that it proves any thing. The chemist and physical philosopher are deeply interested in the application of their principles to the arts; and will not the same law of our nature operate in moral speculations? Can he rest at ease, whose conduct is constantly at variance with the principles he is labouring to establish, and the rules he is forming for others? Will he not rather, if he cannot suit his life to his theory, accommodate his theory to his life? Thus Rousseau substituted sentiment for virtue; and the profligacy of his manners was at once the cause and the effect of the profligacy of his writings. I am unwilling to think that one can have the beauty of moral order, and the indications of moral design, constantly in view, without having his feelings touched and his heart made better. Can you breathe the pure mountain air, and not be refreshed? Can you walk forth amidst the beautiful and grand of the works of God, and feel no kindling of devotion?

If the effect, we have described, be natural, it cannot be confined to the philosopher alone; it will extend itself in his instructions and writings. The same views will be gradually applied in the formation of the dispositions and habits of children; they will become an important branch of liberal knowledge; and thus exert a control over the higher classes of society, over men of letters and the popular authors of the day.

This suggests to us another means of practical influence. Those compositions in poetry and prose, which constitute the literature of a nation, the essay, the drama, the novel, it cannot be doubted, have a most extensive and powerful operation upon the moral feelings and character of the age. The very business of the authors of such works is directly or indirectly with the heart. Even descriptions of natural scenery owe much of their beauty and interest to the moral associations they awaken. In like manner fine turns of expressions or thought often operate more by suggestion than enumeration. But when feelings and passions are directly described, or embodied in the hero and called forth by the incidents of a story, it is then, that the magic of fiction and poetry is complete, that they enter in and dwell in the secret chambers of the very soul, moulding it at will. In these moments of deep excitement, must not a bias be given to the character, and much be done to elevate and refine, or degrade and pollute, those sympathies and sentiments, which are the sources of much of our virtue and happiness, or our guilt and misery? The danger is that, in such cases, we do not discriminate the distinct action of associated causes. Even in what is presented to the senses, we are aware of the power of habitual combination. An object naturally disagreeable becomes beautiful, because we have often seen the sun shine or the dew sparkle upon it, or it has been grouped in a scene of peculiar interest. Thus the powers of fancy and of taste blend associations in the mind, which disguise the original nature of moral qualities. A liberal generosity, a disinterested self-devotion, a powerful energy or deep sensibility of soul, a contempt of danger and death are often so connected in story with the most profligate principles and manners, that the latter are excused and even sanctified by the former. The impression, which so powerfully seizes all the sympathies, is one; and the ardent youth becomes almost ambitious of a character, he ought to abhor. So too sentiments, from which in their plain form delicacy would revolt, are insinuated with the charms of poetical imagery and expression; and even the coarseness of Fielding is probably less pernicious than the seducing refinement of writers like Moore; whose voluptuous sensibility steals upon the heart and corrupts its purity, as the moon-beams in some climates, are believed to poison the substances, on which they fall.

But in no productions of modern genius is the reciprocal influence of morals and literature more distinctly seen than in those of the author of Childe Harold. His character produced the poems, and it cannot be doubted, that his poems are adapted to produce such a character. His heroes speak a language, supplied not more by imagination, than consciousness. They are not those machines, that, by a contrivance of the artist, send forth a music of their own; but instruments, through which he breathes his very soul, in tones of agonized sensibility, that cannot but give a sympathetic impulse to those who hear. The desolate misanthrophy of his mind rises and throws its dark shade over his poetry, like one of his own ruined castles; we feel it to be sublime, but we forget, that it is a sublimity it cannot have, till it is abandoned by every thing, that is kind and peaceful and happy, and its halls are ready to become the haunts of outlaws and assassins. Nor are his more tender and affectionate passages those, to which we can yield ourselves without a feeling of uneasiness. It is not that we can here and there select a proposition formerly false or pernicious; but that he leaves an impression unfavourable to a healthful state of thought and feeling, peculiarly dangerous to the finest minds and most susceptible hearts. They are the scene of a summer evening, where all is tender and beautiful and grand; but the damps of disease descend with the dews of heaven, and the pestilent vapours of night are breathed in with the fragrance and balm and the delicate and fair are the surest victims of the exposure.

Although I have illustrated the moral influence of literature, principally from its mischiefs; yet it is obvious if what I have said be just, it may be rendered no less powerful, as a means of good. Is it not true that within the last century a decided and important improvement in the moral character of our literature has taken place; and, had Pope and Smollet written at the present day, would the former have published the imitations of Chaucer, or the latter the adventures of Pickle and Random? Genius cannot now sanctify impurity or want of principle; and our critics and reviewers are exercising jurisdiction not only upon the literary but moral blemishes of the authors, that come before them. We notice with peculiar pleasure the sentence of just indignation, which the Edinburgh tribunal has pronounced upon Moore, Swift, Goethe, and in general the German sentimentalists. Indeed the fountains of literature into which an enemy has sometimes infused poison, naturally flow with refreshment and health. Cowper and Campbell have led the muses to repose in the bowers of religion and virtue; and Miss Edgeworth has so cautiously combined the features of her characters, that the predominant expression is ever what it should be; she has shown us, not vices ennobled by virtues, but virtues, degraded and perverted by their union with vices. The success of this lady has been great, but had she availed herself more of the motives and sentiments of religion, we think it would have been greater. She has stretched forth a powerful hand to the impotent in virtue; and had she added, with the apostle, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, we should almost have expected miracles from its touch.

Frisbie.

§ 173. *Moral taste.*

Sensibility to beauty is in some degree common to all; but it is infinitely varied, according as it has been cultivated by habit and education. To the man whose taste has been formed on just principles, and who has been led to perceive and relish what is truly beautiful, a new world is opened. He looks abroad over nature, and contemplates the productions of art, with sentiments, to which those, who are destitute of this faculty, are strangers. He perceives in the works of God, and in the contrivances of man, all the *utility* for which they were destined and adapted, in common with others; but besides this, his heart is filled with sentiments of the *beautiful* or the *grand*, according to the nature of the object. The qualities, which are the occasion of this sentiment, may be ascertained and classed; and the laws of its operation settled; but the sentiment itself can be known only from experience, and cannot be defined. It is in literature, that taste, in the more common use of the word, has its most extensive sphere, and most varied gratifications; yet whether it be exercised on nature, the fine arts, or literature, we are aware how much depends on associations with life, feeling, and human character. Why does the traveller wander with such peculiar interest over the mountains and plains of Italy and Greece, but because every spot is consecrated by the memory of great events, or presents to him the memorials of departed genius? It is for this reason, that poetry peoples even solitude and desolation with imaginary life; so that in ancient days, every forest had its Dryads, every fountain its nymphs, and the voice of the Naiades was heard in the murmuring of the streams. It is partly in reference to the same principle, that deserts and mountains, where all is barrenness and solitude, raise in the mind emotions of sublimity. It is a feeling of vastness and desolation that depends in a great degree on the absence of every thing, having life or action. The mere modifications of nature are beautiful; the human form, from its just proportions, the human face, from the harmonious combination of features and colouring; but it is only when this form is living and moving, and when this face is suffused with emotion, and animated with intelligence, when the attitude and the look alike express the workings of the heart and mind, that we feel the perfect sentiment of beauty.

Thus inanimate nature, and literature in its transcripts of the aspects of nature, become most interesting by association with life and action, and above all with man. It is from descriptions of man, considered as a moral being, that even literary taste receives many of its highest gratifications. There is a moral as well as natural beauty and grandeur. A rational agent, animated by high principles of virtue, exhibiting the most generous affections, and preferring on all occasions what is just to what is expedient, is the noblest picture which the hand of genius can present. Very few indeed are insensible to those fine touches of moral feeling, which are given in our best writers; but their full effect requires not only an improved mind, but a heart in harmony with whatever is most excellent in our natures, and a lively susceptibility to moral greatness. This susceptibility is *moral taste.*

Moral taste, then, is a quick sensibility to right and wrong. It perceives and enjoys whatever is generous, elevated, or true in character and conduct, especially in their more refined and uncommon displays; and is offended with all that is selfish, debasing, or false. Its province is not merely the observation of the actions of others; it is at once the watchful guardian and the highest reward of personal virtue. It often anticipates the decisions of reason, and gives the alarm, especially in minor duties, when conscience perhaps would be hardly sensible of danger. It secures us, in many instances, from temptation, by turning with disgust from much, that otherwise might have a tendency to seduce and corrupt. A true moral sense is offended, not only by absolute injustice or malignity, but by whatever, either in manner or the expression of sentiments, may have any remote influence unfavourable to virtue. In a word, the advances which one may have made in moral worth, may be in a great measure graduated by the sensibility and refinement of this faculty. But this moral taste is not only a security to virtue, it affords its highest and most appropriate reward. The happiness of virtue consists not in any ulterior good it may procure, but in the very love and practice of it. It consists not in the dowry which virtue brings, but in herself with all her loveliness. The satisfactions of a heart overflowing with kind affections, harmonized to a love of order, delighting in whatever is pure and excellent, constantly seeking and acquiring new degrees of goodness, in short, being and doing good; these are the true, the essential rewards of virtue. When we say that God has established a connexion between virtue and happiness, vice and misery, it is not only a consequential, but an essential connexion, of which we speak. Virtue *is* happiness, and vice *is* misery.

Moral taste is easily distinguished from those principles before mentioned. The object of benevolence is the happiness of others, that of moral taste is their actions, and the feelings, and principles which produce them. A sense of duty is a conviction that we are bound to conform to the laws of rectitude; moral taste delights in this conformity. Approbation is a sentiment, implying a judgment of the understanding, a judgment that we cannot but pronounce, when we perceive what is right. But the pleasure with which this judgment is accompanied, in a greater or less degree, is moral taste. This taste, as it may enter into, is the consummation of all our moral principles.

It is then a most important inquiry; How may this principle be developed and cultivated, and by what is it impaired or destroyed?

A literary taste, while it has its principles in the nature of the mind, is formed by the study and imitation of the best models, and by having the attention habitually directed to what is truly beautiful. Moral taste is founded, in like manner, in our constitution, is cherished and cultivated by familiarity with moral beauty, and by avoiding whatever has a tendency to impair the love of what is right, and the aversion to what is wrong.

As our opinion of duty is greatly influenced by our moral taste, so, on the other hand, moral taste is much affected by our judgment of what is right. Hence it is above all things necessary, that this taste should be founded in just notions of rectitude, and supported by virtuous conduct. It is impossible that he should long love virtue, whose actions are habitually at variance with her principles and rules. But it is to influences more remote and indirect, influences less suspected, and therefore more to be feared, that I would call your attention. There are many circumstances, which do not solicit us to violate our sense of duty, which yet lessen our reverence for virtue, and abhorrence of vice, and thus fatally break down the barriers to practical aberrations from the course of rectitude.

The first I shall mention, is intimacy with such individuals, as combine amiable qualities, intelligent minds, and cultivated manners, with a disregard of principle and corrupt morals. As bigotry, cant, and superstition often give a disgusting, ridiculous, or repulsive air even to true piety, which it requires no small effort of the mind to separate from it; in like manner, vice is often so united with engaging qualities, that it is either "pardoned for the association or lost in the assemblage." The ingenious and well educated youth is at first, perhaps, offended, and even pained by the indecent allusion or profane jest; but they are uttered in such good company, and seasoned with so much wit, that they are forgiven, as the venial errors of a good heart. When this is the case, it is too certain, they will soon be heard with indifference, and at last joined in without compunction.

The same effect is produced by two classes of books. The one, where the power of the writer has concealed the deformity of vice under refinement of expression, or confounded its nature by associating it with qualities, which are interesting and amiable. Here perhaps the *delicacy* of taste is not so much impaired, as its *correctness* perverted; it is not insensibility, but error, which is produced. The warmth of genius, like that of the tropical sun, has called up a luxuriance of vegetation; and the unwary observer is unconscious of the poison that is breathed from flowers so sweet, or the reptiles that hide under foliage so beautiful.

But there is another class of books, in which there is no disguise; and profligacy and vice appear without a veil; although perhaps their names may be a little changed. Drunkenness is conviviality, and libertinism, warmth of constitution. Yet there is so much to awaken curiosity in the narrative, so much of humour, of truth, and of human nature in the characters and incidents, that by many, the faults are pardoned for the sake of the excellencies, till these very faults increase the relish of the whole; '*rancidum aprum laudant.*' I have heard the putting of such books into the hands of the young defended by an argument like this; that they are a sort of preparatory discipline for the temptations of real life;—that in the commerce of the world, the young cannot but be exposed to the seductions of vice, and it is best they should know before hand something of its nature and power, that they may be the better able to withstand them. In answer to this, it may, I think, be said, that those circumstances, which impair the delicacy of moral feeling, and silently seduce the imagination and passions, without directly leading to conduct, are more dangerous in their effects, than temptations, which immediately allure us to act wrong; because the former, calling for no resistance, and producing no reaction, leave the principles of virtue enfeebled; whereas the latter, requiring an active determination of the will, the same mind would recoil from them with abhorrence. Impressions merely passive steal upon the heart and pollute the sources of moral health; while temptations, counteracted by positive resistance and opposite conduct, produce a salutary exercise, by which the moral powers are invigorated. *Frisbie.*

§ 174. *On the utility of knowledge in general.*

As the power of acquiring knowledge is to be ascribed to reason, so the attainment of it mightily strengthens and improves it, and thereby enables it to enrich itself with farther acquisitions. Knowledge in general expands the mind, exalts the faculties, refines the taste of pleasure, and opens innumerable sources of intellectual enjoyment. By means of it, we become less dependent for satisfaction upon the sensitive appetites, the gross pleasures of sense are more easily despised, and we are made to feel the superiority of the spiritual to the material part of our nature. Instead of being continually solicited by the influence and irritation of sensible objects, the mind can retire within herself, and expatiate in the cool and quiet walks of contemplation. The author of nature has wisely annexed a pleasure to the exercise of our active powers, and particularly to the pursuit of truth, which if it be in some instances less intense, is far more durable than the gratifications of sense, and is on that account incomparably more valuable. Its duration, to say nothing of its other properties, renders it more valuable. It may be repeated without satiety, and pleases afresh on every reflection upon it. These are self-created satisfactions, always within our reach, not dependent upon events, not requiring a peculiar combination of circumstances to produce or maintain them, they rise from the mind itself, and inhere, so to speak, in its very substance. Let the mind but retain its proper functions, and they spring up spontaneously, unsolicited, unborrowed, and unbought. Even the difficulties and impediments which obstruct the pursuit of truth, serve, according to the economy under which we are placed, to render it more interesting. The labour of intellectual search, resembles and exceeds the tumultuous pleasures of the chase, and the consciousness of overcoming a formidable obstacle, or of lighting on some happy discovery, gives all the enjoyment of a conquest, without those corroding reflections by which the latter must be impaired. Can we doubt that Archimedes, who was so absorbed in his contemplations as not to be diverted by the sacking of his native city, and was killed in the very act of meditating a mathematical theorem, did not when he exclaimed ευρηκα! ευρηκα!* feel a transport as genuine as was ever experienced after the most brilliant victory?

But to return to the moral good which results from the acquisition of knowledge; it is chiefly this, that by multiplying the mental resources, it has a tendency to exalt the character, and, in some measure, to correct and subdue the taste for gross sensuality. It enables the possessor to beguile his leisure moments (and every man has such) in an innocent at least, if not in a useful manner. The poor man who can read, and who possesses a taste for reading, can find entertainment at home, without being tempted to repair to the public-house for that purpose. His mind can find him employment when his body is at rest; he does not lie prostrate and afloat on the current of incidents, liable to be carried whithersover the impulse of appetite may direct. There is in the mind of such a man an intellectual spring urging him to the pursuit of *mental* good; and if the minds of his family also are a little cultivated, conversation becomes the more interesting, and the sphere of domestic enjoyment enlarged. The calm satisfaction which books afford, puts him into a disposition to relish more exquisitely, the tranquil delight inseparable from the indulgence of conjugal and parental affection; and as he will be more respectable in the eyes of his family than he who can teach them nothing, he will be naturally induced to cultivate whatever may preserve, and shun whatever would impair that respect. He who is inured to reflection will carry his views beyond the present hour; he will extend his prospect a little into futurity, and be disposed to make some provision for his approaching wants; whence will result an increased motive to industry, together with a care to husband his earnings, and to avoid unnecessary expense. The poor man who has gained a taste for good books, will in all likelihood become thoughtful, and when you have given the poor a habit of thinking, you have conferred on them a much greater favour than by the gift of a large sum of money, since you have put them in possession of the *principle* of all legitimate prosperity.

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* I have found it! I have found it!

I am persuaded that the extreme profligacy, improvidence, and misery, which are so prevalent among the labouring classes in many countries, are chiefly to be ascribed to the want of education. In proof of this we need only cast our eyes on the condition of the Irish, compared with that of the peasantry in Scotland. Among the former you behold nothing but beggary, wretchedness, and sloth: in Scotland on the contrary under the disadvantages of a worse climate and more unproductive soil, a degree of decency and comfort, the fruit of sobriety and industry, are conspicuous among the lower classes. And to what is this disparity in their situation to be ascribed, except to the influence of education? In Ireland, the education of the poor is miserably neglected, very few of them can read, and they grow up in a total ignorance of what it most befits a rational creature to understand; while in Scotland the establishment of free-schools in every parish, an essential branch of the ecclesiastical constitution of the country, brings the means of instruction within the reach of the poorest, who are there inured to decency, industry, and order.

Some have objected to the instruction of the lower classes, from an apprehension that it would lift them above their sphere, make them dissatisfied with their station in life, and by impairing the habit of subordination, endanger the tranquillity of the state; an objection devoid surely of all force and validity. It is not easy to conceive in what manner instructing men in their duties can prompt them to neglect those duties, or how that enlargement of reason which enables them to comprehend the true grounds of authority and the obligation to obedience, should indispose them to obey. The admirable mechanism of society, together with that subordination of ranks which is essential to its subsistence, is surely not an elaborate imposture, which the exercise of reason will detect and expose. The objection we have stated, implies a reflection on the social order, equally impolitic, invidious, and unjust. Nothing in reality renders legitimate government so insecure as extreme ignorance in the people. It is this which yields them an easy prey to seduction, makes them the victims of prejudice and false alarms, and so ferocious withal, that their interference in a time of public commotion, is more to be dreaded than the eruption of a volcano. *Robert Hall.*

§ 175. *Influence of scepticism on morals.*

The sceptical, or irreligious system, subverts the whole foundation of morals. It may be assumed as a maxim, that no person can be required to act contrary to his greatest good, or his highest interest, comprehensively viewed in relation to the whole duration of his being. It is often our duty to forego our own interest *partially*, to sacrifice a smaller pleasure for the sake of a greater, to incur a present evil in pursuit of a distant good of more consequence. In a word, to arbitrate amongst interfering claims of inclination is the moral arithmetic of human life.—But to risk the happiness of the whole duration of our being in any case whatever, admitting it to be possible, would be foolish; because the sacrifice must, by the nature of it, be so great as to preclude the possibility of compensation.

As the present world on sceptical principles, is the only place of recompense, whenever the practice of virtue fails to promise the greatest sum of present good, cases which often occur in reality, and much oftener in appearance, every motive to virtuous conduct is superseded; a deviation from rectitude becomes the part of wisdom; and should the path of virtue, in addition to this, be obstructed by disgrace, torment, or death, to persevere would be madness and folly, and a violation of the first and most essential law of nature. Virtue, on these principles, being in numberless instances at war with self-preservation, never can, or ought to become, a fixed habit of the mind.

The system of infidelity is not only incapable of arming virtue for great and trying occasions, but leaves it unsupported in the most ordinary occurrences. In vain will its advocates appeal to a moral sense, to benevolence and sympathy. In vain will they expatiate on the tranquillity and pleasure attendant on a virtuous course; for it is undeniable that these impulses may be overcome: and though you may remind the offender that in disregarding them he has violated his nature, and that a conduct consistent with them is productive of much internal satisfaction; yet if he reply that his taste is of a different sort, that there are other gratifications which he values more, and that every man must choose his own pleasures, the argument is at an end.

Rewards and punishments, awarded by omnipotent power, afford a palpable and pressing motive which can never be neglected without renouncing the character of a rational creature: but tastes and relishes are not to be prescribed.

A motive in which the reason of man shall acquiesce, enforcing the practice of virtue at all times and seasons, enters into the very essence of moral obligation. Modern infidelity supplies no such motives: it is therefore essentially and infallibly a system of enervation, turpitude, and vice.

This chasm in the construction of morals can only be supplied by the firm belief of a rewarding and avenging Deity, who binds duty and happiness, though they may seem distant, in an indissoluble chain, without which, whatever usurps the name of virtue, is not a principle, but a feeling; not a determinate rule, but a fluctuating expedient, varying with the tastes of individuals, and changing with the scenes of life.

Nor is this the only way in which infidelity subverts the foundation of morals. All reasoning on morals pre-supposes a distinction between inclinations and duties, affections and rules. The former prompt; the latter prescribe. The former supply motives to action; the latter regulate and control it. Hence it is evident, if virtue have any just claim to authority, it must be under the latter of these notions; that is under the character of a law. It is under this notion, *in fact*, that its dominion has ever been acknowledged to be paramount and supreme.

But without the intervention of a superior will, it is impossible there should be any moral laws, except in the lax metaphorical sense in which we speak of the laws of matter and motion. Men being essentially equal, morality is, on these principles, only a stipulation, or silent compact, into which every individual is supposed to enter, as far as suits his convenience, and for the breach of which he is accountable to nothing but his own mind. His own mind is his law, his tribunal, and his judge!

Two consequences, the most disastrous to society, will inevitably follow the general prevalence of this system; the frequent perpetration of great crimes, and the total absence of great virtues.

1. In those conjunctures which tempt avarice or inflame ambition, when a crime flatters with the prospect of impunity, and the certainty of immense advantage, what is to restrain an atheist from its commission? To say that remorse will deter him, is absurd: for remorse, as distinguished from pity, is the sole offspring of religious belief, the extinction of which is the great purpose of the infidel philosophy.

The dread of punishment, or infamy, from his fellow-creatures, will be an equally ineffectual barrier; because crimes are only committed under such circumstances as suggest the hope of concealment: not to say that crimes themselves will soon lose their infamy and their horror, under the influence of that system which destroys the sanctity of virtue, by converting it into a low calculation of worldly interest. Here the sense of an ever-present Ruler, and of an avenging Judge, is of the most awful and indispensable necessity; as it is that alone which impresses on all crimes the character of *folly*, shows that duty and interest in every instance coincide, and that the most prosperous career of vice, the most brilliant successes of criminality, are but an *accumulation of wrath against the day of wrath.*

As the frequent perpetration of great crimes is an inevitable consequence of the diffusion of sceptical principles; so, to understand this consequence in its full extent, we must look beyond their immediate effects, and consider the disruption of social ties, the destruction of confidence, the terror, suspicion, and hatred, which must prevail in that state of society, in which barbarous deeds are familiar. The tranquillity which pervades a well-ordered community, and the mutual good offices which bind its members together, is founded on an implied confidence in the disposition to annoy; in the justice, humanity, and moderation of those among whom we dwell. So that the worst consequence of crimes is, that they impair the stock of public charity and general tenderness. The dread and hatred of our species would infallibly be grafted on a conviction that we were exposed every moment to the surges of an unbridled ferocity, and that nothing but the power of the magistrate stood between us and the daggers of assassins. In such a state, laws, deriving no support from public manners, are unequal to the task of curbing the fury of the passions; which, from being concentrated into selfishness, fear, and revenge, acquire new force. Terror and suspicion beget cruelty, and inflict injuries by way of prevention. Pity is extinguished in the stronger impulse of self-preservation. The tender and generous affections are crushed; and nothing is seen but the retaliation of wrongs, the fierce and unmitigated struggle for superiority. This is but a faint sketch of the incalculable calamities and horrors we must expect, should we be so unfortunate as ever to witness the triumph of modern infidelity.

2. This system is a soil as barren of great and sublime virtues as it is prolific in crimes. By great and sublime virtues are meant, those which are called into action on great and trying occasions, which demand the sacrifice of the dearest interests and prospects of human life, and sometimes of life itself. The virtues, in a word, which, by their rarity and splendour, draw admiration, and have rendered illustrious the character of patriots, martyrs, and confessors. It requires but little reflection to perceive, that whatever veils a future world, and contracts the limits of

existence within the present life, must tend, in a proportionable degree, to diminish the grandeur and narrow the sphere of human agency.

As well might you expect exalted sentiments of justice from a professed gamester, as look for noble principles in the man whose hopes and fears are all suspended on the present moment, and who stakes the whole happiness of his being on the events of this vain and fleeting life. If he be ever impelled to the performance of great achievements in a good cause, it must be solely by the hope of fame; a motive which, besides that it makes virtue the servant of opinion, usually grows weaker at the approach of death; and which, however it may surmount the love of existence in the heat of battle, or in the moment of public observation, can seldom be expected to operate with much force on the retired duties of a private station.

In affirming that infidelity is unfavourable to the higher class of virtues, we are supported as well by facts as by reasoning. We should be sorry to load our adversaries with unmerited reproach: but to what history, to what record will they appeal for the traits of moral greatness exhibited by their disciples? Where shall we look for the trophies of infidel magnanimity, or atheistical virtue? Not that we mean to accuse them of inactivity; they have recently filled the world with the fame of their exploits; exploits of a different kind indeed, but of imperishable memory, and disastrous lustre.

Though it is confessed great and splendid actions are not the ordinary employment of life, but must, from their nature, be reserved for high and eminent occasions; yet that system is essentially defective which leaves no room for their cultivation. They are important, both from their immediate advantage and their remoter influence. They often save, and always illustrate, the age and nation in which they appear. They raise the standard of morals: they arrest the progress of degeneracy; they diffuse a lustre over the path of life; monuments of the greatness of the human soul, they present to the world the august image of virtue in her sublimest form, from which streams of light and glory issue to remote times and ages: while their commemoration, by the pen of historians and poets, awakens in distant bosoms the sparks of kindred excellence.

Combine the frequent and familiar perpetration of atrocious deeds with the dearth of great and generous actions, and you have the exact picture of that condition of society which completes the degradation of the species: the frightful contrast of dwarfish virtues and gigantic vices, where every thing good is mean and little, and every thing evil is rank and luxuriant: a dead and sickening uniformity prevails, broken only at intervals by volcanic eruptions of anarchy and crime.

Robert Hall.

§ 176. *On the influence of taste and sensibility in matters of religion.*

You easily understand how a taste for music is one thing, and a real submission to the influence of religion is another—how the ear may be regaled by the melody of sound, and the heart may utterly refuse the proper impression of the sense that is conveyed by it—how the sons and daughters of the world may, with their every affection devoted to its perishable vanities, inhale all the delights of enthusiasm, as they sit in crowded assemblage around the deep and solemn oratorio—aye, and whether it be the humility of penitential feeling, or the rapture of grateful acknowledgment, or the sublime of a contemplative piety, or the aspiration of pure and of holy purposes, which breathes throughout the words of the performance, and gives to it all the spirit and all the expression by which it is pervaded; it is a very possible thing, that the moral, and the rational, and the active man, may have given no entrance into his bosom for any of these sentiments; and yet so overpowered may he be by the charm of the vocal conveyance through which they are addressed to him, that he may be made to feel with such an emotion, and to weep with such a tenderness, and to kindle with such a transport, and to glow with such an elevation, as may one and all carry upon them the semblance of sacredness.

But might not this semblance deceive him? Have you never heard any tell, and with complacency too, how powerfully his devotion was awakened by an act of attendance on the oratorio—how his heart, melted and subdued by the influence of harmony, did homage to all the religion of which it was the vehicle—how he was so moved and overborne, that he had to shed the tears of contrition, and to be agitated by the terrors of judgment, and to receive an awe upon his spirit of the greatness and the majesty of God—and that, wrought up to the lofty pitch of eternity, he could look down upon the world, and by the glance of one commanding survey, pronounce upon the littleness and the vanity of all its concerns? Oh! it is very, very possible that all this might thrill upon the ears of the man, and circulate a succession of solemn and affecting images around his fancy—and yet that essential principle of his nature, upon which the practical influence of Christianity turns, might have met with no reaching and no subduing efficacy whatever to arouse it. He leaves the exhibition, as dead in trespasses and sins as he came to it. Conscience has not wakened upon him. Repentance has not turned him. Faith has not made any positive lodgement within him of her great and her constraining realities. He speeds him back to his business and to his family, and there he plays off the old man in all the entireness of his uncrucified temper, and of his obstinate worldliness, and of all those earthly and unsanctified affections, which are found to cleave to him with as great tenacity as ever. He is really and experimentally the very same man as before—and all those sensibilities which seemed to bear upon them so much of the air and unction of heaven, are found to go into dissipation, and be forgotten with the loveliness of the song.

Amid all that illusion which such momentary visitations of seriousness and of sentiment throw around the character of man, let us never lose sight of the test, that "by their fruits ye shall know them." It is not coming up to this test, that you hear and are delighted. It is that you hear and do. This is the ground upon which the reality of your religion is discriminated now; and on the day of reckoning, this is the ground upon which your religion will be judged then; and that award is to be passed upon you, which will fix and perpetuate your destiny for ever. You have a taste for music. This no more implies the hold and the ascendency of religion over you, than that you have a taste for beautiful scenery, or a taste for painting, or even a taste for the sensualities of epicurism. But music may be made to express the glow and the movement of devotional feeling; and is it saying nothing to say that the heart of him who listens with a raptured ear, is, through the whole time of the performance, in harmony with such a movement? Why is it saying nothing to the purpose. Music may lift the inspiring note of patriotism;

and the inspiration may be felt; and it may thrill over the recesses of the soul, to the mustering up of all its energies; and it may sustain, to the last cadence of the song, the firm nerve and purpose of intrepidity; and all this may be realized upon him, who in the day of battle, and upon actual collision with the dangers of it, turns out to be a coward. And music may lull the feelings into unison with piety; and stir up the inner man to lofty determinations; and so engage for a time his affections, that as if weaned from the dust, they promise an immediate entrance on some great and elevated career, which may carry him through his pilgrimage superior to all the sordid and grovelling enticements that abound in it. But he turns him to the world, and all this glow abandons him; and the words which he hath heard, he doeth them not; and in the hour of temptation he turns out to be a deserter from the law of allegiance; and the test I have now specified looks hard upon him, and discriminates him amid all the parading insignificance of his fine but fugitive emotions, to be the subject both of present guilt and of future vengeance.

The faithful application of this test would put to flight a host of other delusions. It may be carried round amongst all those phenomena of human character, where there is the exhibition of something associated with religion, but which is not religion itself. An exquisite relish for music is no test of the influence of Christianity. Neither are many other of the exquisite sensibilities of our nature. When a kind mother closes the eyes of her expiring babe, she is thrown into a flood of sensibility, and soothing to her heart are the sympathy and the prayers of an attending minister. When a gathering neighbourhood assemble to the funeral of an acquaintance, one pervading sense of regret and tenderness sits on the face of the company; and the deep silence, broken only by the solemn utterance of the man of God, carries a kind of pleasing religiousness along with it. The sacredness of the hallowed day, and the decencies of its observation, may engage the affections of him who loves to walk in the footsteps of his father; and every recurring Sabbath may bring to his bosom the charm of its regularity and its quietness. Religion has its accompaniments: and in these, there may be something to sooth, and to fascinate, even in the absence of the appropriate influences of religion. The deep and tender impression of a family-bereavement, is not religion. The love of established decencies, is not religion. The charm of all that sentimentalism which is associated with many of its solemn and affecting services, is not religion. They may form the distinct folds of its accustomed drapery; but they do not, any, or all of them put together, make up the substance of the thing itself. A mother's tenderness may flow most gracefully over the tomb of her departed little one; and she may talk the while of that heaven whither its spirit has ascended. The man whom death had widowed of his friend, may abandon himself to the movements of that grief, which for a time will claim an ascendency over him; and, amongst the multitude of his other reveries, may love to hear of the eternity, where sorrow and separation are alike unknown. He who has been trained, from his infant days, to remember the Sabbath, may love the holiness of its aspect; and associate himself with all its observances; and take a delighted share in the mechanism of its forms. But let not these think, because the tastes and the sensibilities which engross them, may be blended with religion, that they indicate either its strength or its existence within them. I recur to the test. I press its imperious exactions upon you. I call for fruit, and demand the permanency of a religious influence on the habits and the history. Oh! how many who take a flattering unction to their souls, when they think of their amiable feelings, and their becoming observations, with whom this severe touchstone would, like the head of Medusa, put to flight all their complacency. The afflictive dispensation is forgotten—and he on whom it was laid, is practically as indifferent to God and to eternity as before. The Sabbath services come to a close; and they are followed by the same routine of week-day worldliness as before. In neither the one case nor the other, do we see more of the radical influence of Christianity, than in the sublime and melting influence of sacred music upon the soul; and all this tide of emotion is found to die away from the bosom, like the pathos or like the loveliness of a song.

The instances may be multiplied without number. A man may have a taste for eloquence, and eloquence the most touching or sublime may lift her pleading voice on the side of religion. A man may love to have his understanding stimulated by the ingenuities, or the resistless urgencies of an argument; an argument the most profound and the most overbearing, may put forth all the might of a constraining vehemence in behalf of religion. A man may feel the rejoicings of a conscious elevation, when some ideal scene of magnificence is laid before him; and where are these scenes so readily to be met with, as when led to expatiate in thought over the track of eternity, or to survey the wonders of creation, or to look to the magnitude of those great and universal interests which lie within the compass of religion. A man may have his attention riveted and regaled by that power of imitative description, which brings all the recollections of his own experience before him; which presents him with a faithful analysis of his own heart; which embodies in language such intimacies of observation and of feeling, as have often passed before his eyes, or played within his bosom, but had never been so truly or so ably pictured to the view of his remembrance. Now, all this may be done in the work of pressing the duties of religion; in the work of instancing the applications of religion; in the work of pointing those allusions to life and to manners, which manifest the truth to the conscience, and plant such a conviction of sin, as forms the very basis of a sinner's religion. Now, in all these cases, I see other principles brought into action, and which may be in a state of most lively and vigorous movement, and be yet in a state of entire separation from the principle of religion. I will make bold to say, on the strength of these illustrations, that as much delight may emanate from the pulpit, on an arrested audience beneath it, as ever emanated from the boards of a theatre—aye, and with as total a disjunction of mind too in the one case as in the other, from the essence or the habit of religion. I recur to the test. I make my appeal to experience; and I put it to you all, whether your finding upon the subject do not agree with my saying about it, that a man may weep, and admire, and have many of his faculties put upon the stretch of their most intense gratification—his judgment established, and his fancy enlivened, and his feelings overpowered, and his hearing charmed, as by the accents of heavenly persuasion, and all within him feasted by the rich and varied luxuries of an intellectual banquet!—Oh! it is cruel to frown unmannerly in the midst of so much satisfaction. But I must not forget that truth has her authority, as well as her sternness; and she forces me to affirm, that after all this has been felt and gone through, there might not be one principle which lies at the turning-point of conversation, that has experienced a single movement—not one of its purposes be conceived—not one of its doings be accomplished—not one step of that repentance, which if we have not, we perish, so much as entered upon—not one announcement of that faith, by which we are saved, admitted into a real and actual possession by the inner man. He has had his hour's entertainment, and willingly does he award this homage to the performer, that he hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument—but, in another hour, it fleets away from his remembrance, and goes all to nothing, like the loveliness of a song.

Chalmers.

§ 177. *On the influence of the dissipation of cities in corrupting the young.*

It may be said of a very great number of young, on their entrance into the business of the world, that they have not been enough fortified against its seducing influences by their previous education at home. Generally speaking, they come out from the habitation of their parents unarmed and unprepared for the contest which awaits them. If the spirit of this world's morality reign in their own family, then it cannot be, that their introduction into a more public scene of life will be very strictly guarded against those vices on which the world placitly smiles, or at least regards with silent toleration. They may have been told in early boyhood, of the infamy of a lie. They may have had the virtues of punctuality, and of economy, and of regular attention to business, pressed upon their observation. They may have heard a uniform testimony on the side of good behaviour, up to the standard of such current moralities as obtain in their neighbourhood; and this, we are ready to admit, may include in it a testimony against all such excesses of dissipation as would unfit them for the prosecution of this world's interests. But let us ask, whether there are not parents, who, after they have carried the work of discipline thus far, forbear to carry it any farther; who, while they would mourn over it as a family trial should any son of theirs fall a victim to excessive dissipation, yet are willing to tolerate the lesser degrees of it; who, instead of deciding the question on the alternative of his heaven or his hell, are satisfied with such a measure of sobriety as will save him from ruin and disgrace in this life; who, if they can only secure this, have no great objection to the moderate share he may take in this world's conformities; who feel, that in this matter there is a necessity and a power of example against which it is vain to struggle, and which must be acquiesced in; who deceive themselves with the fancied impossibility of stopping the evil in question—and say, that business must be gone through; and that, in the prosecution of it, exposures must be made; and that, for the success of it, a certain degree of accommodation to others must be observed; and seeing that it is so mighty an object for one to widen the extent of his connexions, he must neither be very retired nor very peculiar—nor must his hours of companionship be too jealously watched or inquired into—nor must we take him too strictly to task about engagements, and acquaintances, and expenditure—nor must we forget, that while sobriety has its time and its season in one period of life, indulgence has its season in another; and we may fetch from there collected follies of our own youth, a lesson of connivance for the present occasion;

and altogether there is no help for it; and it appears to us, that absolutely and totally to secure him from ever entering upon scenes of dissipation, you must absolutely and totally withdraw him from the world, and surrender all his prospects of advancement, and give up the object of such a provision for our families as we feel to be a first and most important concern with us.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," says the Bible, "and all other things shall be added unto you." This is the promise which the faith of a Christian parent will rest upon; and in the face of every hazard to the worldly interests of his offspring, will he bring them up in the strict nurture and admonition of the Lord; and he will loudly protest against iniquity, in all its degrees, and in all its modifications; and while the power of discipline remains with him, will it ever be exerted on the side of pure, faultless, undeviating obedience; and he will tolerate no exception whatever; and he will brave all that looks formidable in singularity, and all that looks menacing in separation from the custom and countenance of the world; and feeling that his main concern is to secure for himself and for his family a place in the city which hath foundations, will he spurn all the maxims, and all the plausibilities of a contagious neighbourhood away from him. He knows the price of his Christianity, and it is that he must break off conformity with the world—nor for any paltry advantage which it has to offer, will he compromise the eternity of his children. And let us tell the parents of another spirit, and another principle, that they are as good as incurring the guilt of human sacrifice; that they are offering up their children at the shrine of an idol; that they are parties in provoking the wrath of God against them here; and on the day when that wrath is to be revealed, shall they hear not only the moanings of their despair, but the outcries of their bitterest execration. On that day, the glance of reproach from their own neglected offspring will throw a deeper shade of wretchedness over the dark and boundless futurity that lies before them. And if, at the time when prophets rung the tidings of God's displeasure against the people of Israel, it was denounced as the foulest of all their abominations that they caused their children to pass through the fire unto Moloch—know ye parents, who, in placing your children on some road to gainful employment, have placed them without a sigh in the midst of depravity, so near and so surrounding, that, without a miracle, they must perish, you have done an act of idolatry to the god of this world; you have commanded your household, after you, to worship him as the great divinity of their lives; and you have caused your children to make their approaches unto his presence—and, in so doing, to pass through the fire of such temptations as have destroyed them.

We do not wish to offer you an overcharged picture on this melancholy subject. What we now say is not applicable to all. Even in the most corrupt and crowded of our cities, parents are to be found, who nobly dare the surrender of every vain and flattering illusion, rather than surrender the Christianity of their children. And what is still more affecting, over the face of the country do we meet with such parents, who look on this world as a passage to another, and on all the members of their household as fellow-travellers to eternity along with them; and who, in this true spirit of believers, feel the salvation of their children to be, indeed, the burden of their best and dearest interest; and who, by prayer, and precept, and example, have strenuously laboured with their souls, from the earliest light of their understanding; and have taught them to tremble at the way of evil doers, and to have no fellowship with those who keep not the commandments of God—nor is there a day more sorrowful in the annals of this pious family, than when the course of time has brought them onwards to the departure of their eldest boy—and he must bid adieu to his native home, with all the peace, and all the simplicity which abound in it—and as he eyes in fancy the distant town whither he is going, does he shrink as from the thought of an unknown wilderness—and it is his firm purpose to keep aloof from the dangers and the profligacies which deform it—and, should sinners offer to entice him, not to consent, and never, never, to forget the lessons of a father's vigilance, the tenderness of a mother's prayers.

Let us now, in the next place, pass from that state of things which obtains among the young at their outset into the world, and take a look of that state of things which obtains after they have got fairly introduced into it—when the children of the ungodly, and the children of the religious, meet on one common arena—when business associates them together in one chamber, and the omnipotence of custom lays it upon them all to meet together at periodic intervals, and join in the same parties, and the same entertainments—when the yearly importation of youths from the country falls in with that assimilating mass of corruption which has got so firm and so rooted an establishment in the town—when the frail and unsheltered delicacies of the timid boy have to stand a rude and a boisterous contest with the hardier depravity of those who have gone before him—when ridicule, and example, and the vain words of a delusive sophistry, which palliates in his hearing the enormity of vice, are all brought to bear upon his scruples, and to stifle the remorse he might feel when he casts his principle and his purity away from him—when, placed as he is in a land of strangers, he finds, that the tenure of acquaintanceship, with nearly all around him, is, that he render himself up in a conformity to their doings—when a voice, like the voice of protecting friendship, bids him to the feast; and a welcome, like the welcome of honest kindness, hails his accession to the society; and a spirit, like the spirit of exhilarating joy, animates the whole scene of hospitality before him; and hours of rapture roll successively away on the wings of merriment, and jocularity, and song; and after the homage of many libations has been rendered to honour, and fellowship, and patriotism, impurity is at length proclaimed in full and open cry, as one presiding divinity, at the board of their social entertainment.

And now it remains to compute the general result of a process, which we assert of the vast majority of our young, on their way to manhood, that they have to undergo. The result is, that the vast majority are initiated into all the practices, and describe the full career of dissipation. Those who have imbibed from their fathers the spirit of this world's morality, are not sensibly arrested in this career, either by the opposition of their own friends, or by the voice of their own conscience. Those who have imbibed an opposite spirit, and have brought it into competition with an evil world, and have at length yielded, have done so, we may well suppose, with many a sigh, and many a struggle, and many a look of remembrance on those former years when they were taught to lisp the prayer of infancy, and were trained in a mansion of piety to a reverence for God, and for all his ways; and even still, will a parent's parting advice haunt his memory, and a letter from the good old man revive the sensibilities which at one time guarded and adorned him; and, at times, will the transient gleam of remorse lighten up its agony within him; and when he contrasts the profaneness and depravity of his present companions, with the sacredness of all he ever heard or saw in his father's dwelling, it will almost feel as if conscience were again to resume her power, and the revisiting spirit of God to call him back again from the paths of wickedness; and on his restless bed will the images of guilt conspire to disturb him, and the terrors of punishment offer to scare him away; and many will be the dreary and dissatisfied intervals when he shall be forced to acknowledge, that, in bartering his soul for the pleasures of sin, he has bartered the peace and enjoyment of the world along with it. But alas! the entanglements of companionship have got hold of him; and the inveteracy of habit tyrannises over all his purposes; and the stated opportunity again comes round; and the loud laugh of his partners in guilt chases, for another season, all his despondency away from him; and the infatuation gathers upon him every month; and a hardening process goes on within his heart; and the deceitfulness of sin grows apace; and he at length becomes one of the sturdiest and most unrelenting of her votaries; and he, in his turn, strengthens the conspiracy that is formed against the morals of a new generation; and all the ingenuous delicacies of other days are obliterated; and he contracts a temperament of knowing, hackneyed, unfeeling depravity: and thus the mischief is transmitted from one year to another, and keeps up the guilty history of every place of crowded population.

Chalmers.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CLASSICAL AND HISTORICAL.

§ 1. *Beneficial Effects of a Taste for the* BELLES LETTRES.

Belles Lettres and Criticism chiefly consider man as a being endowed with those powers of taste and imagination, which were intended to embellish his mind, and to supply him with rational and useful entertainment. They open a field of investigation peculiar to themselves. All that relates to beauty, harmony, grandeur, and elegance; all that can sooth the mind, gratify the fancy, or move the affections, belongs to their province. They present human nature under a different aspect from that which it assumes when viewed by other sciences. They bring to light various springs of action, which, without their aid, might have passed unobserved; and which, though of a delicate nature, frequently exert a powerful influence on several departments of human life.

Such studies have also this peculiar advantage, that they exercise our reason without fatiguing it. They lead to inquiries acute, but not painful; profound, but not dry nor abstruse. They strew flowers in the path of science; and while they keep the mind bent, in some degree, and active, they relieve it at the same time from that more toilsome labour to which it must submit in the acquisition of necessary erudition, or the investigation of abstract truth.

Blair.

§ 2. *Beneficial Effects of the Cultivation of* TASTE.

The cultivation of Taste is farther recommended by the happy effects which it naturally tends to produce on human life. The most busy man, in the most active sphere, cannot be always occupied by business. Men of serious professions cannot always be on the stretch of serious thought. Neither can the most gay and flourishing situations of fortune afford any man the power of filling all his hours with pleasure. Life must always languish in the hands of the idle. It will frequently languish even in the hands of the busy, if they have not some employment subsidiary to that which forms their main pursuit. How then shall these vacant spaces, those unemployed intervals, which, more or less, occur in the life of every one, be filled up? How can we contrive to dispose of them in any way that shall be more agreeable in itself, or more consonant to the dignity of the human mind, than in the entertainments of taste, and the study of polite literature? He who is so happy as to have acquired a relish for these, has always at hand an innocent and irreproachable amusement for his leisure hours, to save him from the danger of many a pernicious passion. He is not in hazard of being a burden to himself. He is not obliged to fly to low company, or to court the riot of loose pleasures, in order to cure the tediousness of existence.

Providence seems plainly to have pointed out this useful purpose, to which the pleasures of taste may be applied, by interposing them in a middle station between the pleasures of sense, and those of pure intellect. We were not designed to grovel always among objects so low as the former; nor are we capable of dwelling constantly in so high a region as the latter. The pleasures of taste refresh the mind after the toils of the intellect, and the labours of abstract study; and they gradually raise it above the attachments of sense, and prepare it for the enjoyments of virtue.

So consonant is this to experience, that in the education of youth, no object has in every age appeared more important to wise men than to tincture them early with a relish for the entertainments of taste. The transition is commonly made with ease from these to the discharge of the higher and more important duties of life. Good hopes may be entertained of those whose minds have this liberal and elegant turn. It is favourable to many virtues. Whereas to be entirely devoid of relish for eloquence, poetry, or any of the fine arts, is justly construed to be an unpromising symptom of youth; and raises suspicions of their being prone to low gratifications, or destined to drudge in the more vulgar and illiberal pursuits of life.

Blair.

§ 3. *Improvement of* TASTE *connected with Improvement in* VIRTUE.

There are indeed few good dispositions of any kind with which the improvement of taste is not more or less connected. A cultivated taste increases sensibility to all the tender and humane passions, by giving them frequent exercise; while it tends to weaken the more violent and fierce emotions.

> ——Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
> Emollit mores, nec sinit esse seros.*

The elevated sentiments and high examples which poetry, eloquence, and history are often bringing under our view, naturally tend to nourish in our minds public spirit, the love of glory, contempt of external fortune, and the admiration of what is truly illustrious and great.

I will not go so far as to say that the improvement of taste and of virtue is the same; or that they may always be expected to co-exist in an equal degree. More powerful correctives than taste can apply, are necessary for reforming the corrupt propensities which too frequently prevail among mankind. Elegant speculations are sometimes found to float on the surface of the mind, while bad passions possess the interior regions of the heart. At the same time, this cannot but be admitted, that the exercise of taste is, in its native tendency, moral and purifying. From reading the most admired productions of genius, whether in poetry or prose, almost every one rises with some good impressions left on his mind; and though these may not always be durable, they are at least to be ranked among the means of disposing the heart to virtue. One thing is certain, and I shall hereafter have occasion to illustrate it more fully, that, without possessing the virtuous affections in a strong degree, no man can attain eminence in the sublime parts of eloquence. He must feel what a good man feels, if he expects greatly to move or to interest mankind. They are the ardent sentiments of honour, virtue, magnanimity, and public spirit, that only can kindle that fire of genius, and call up into the mind those high ideas, which attract the admiration of ages; and if this spirit be necessary to produce the most distinguished efforts of eloquence, it must be necessary also to our relishing them with proper taste and feeling. *Blair.*

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* These polish'd arts have humaniz'd mankind,
Soften'd the rude, and calm'd the boist'rous mind.

§ 4. *On* STYLE.

It is not easy to give a precise idea of what is meant by Style. The best definition I can give of it is, the peculiar manner in which a man expresses his conceptions, by means of Language. It is different from mere Language or words. The words which an author employs may be proper and faultless; and his Style, may, nevertheless, have great faults; it may be dry, or stiff, or feeble, or affected. Style has always some reference to an author's manner of thinking. It is a picture of the ideas which rise in his mind, and of the manner in which they rise there; and hence, when we are examining an author's composition, it is, in many cases, extremely difficult to separate the Style from the sentiment. No wonder these two should be so intimately connected, as Style is nothing else, than that sort of expression which our thoughts most readily assume. Hence, different countries have been noted for peculiarities of Style, suited to their different temper and genius. The eastern nations animated their Style with the most strong and hyberbolical figures. The Athenians, a polished and acute people, formed a Style, accurate, clear, and neat. The Asiatics, gay and loose in their manners, affected a Style florid and diffuse. The like sort of characteristical differences are commonly remarked in the Style of the French, the English, and the Spaniards. In giving the general characters of Style, it is usual to talk of a nervous, a feeble, or a spirited Style; which are plainly the characters of a writer's manner of thinking, as well as of expressing himself: so difficult it is to separate these two things from one another. Of the general characters of Style I am afterwards to discourse; but it will be necessary to begin with examining the more simple qualities of it; from the assemblage of which its more complex denominations, in a great measure, result.

All the qualities of a good Style may be ranged under two heads, Perspicuity and Ornament. For all that can possibly be required of Language is, to convey our ideas clearly to the minds of others, and, at the same time, in such a dress, as, by pleasing and interesting them, shall most effectually strengthen the impressions which we seek to make. When both these ends are answered, we certainly accomplish every purpose for which we use writing and discourse. *Ibid.*

§ 5. *On* PERSPICUITY.

Perspicuity, it will be readily admitted, is the fundamental quality of Style; a quality so essential in every kind of writing, that for the want of it nothing can atone. Without this, the richest ornaments of Style only glimmer through the dark; and puzzle, instead of pleasing, the reader. This, therefore, must be our first object to make our meaning clearly and fully understood, and understood without the least difficulty. "Discourse (says Quintilian) ought always to be obvious, even to the most careless and negligent hearer; so that the sense shall strike his mind, as the light of the sun does our eyes, though they are not directed upwards to it. We must study, not only that every hearer may understand us, but that it shall be impossible for him not to understand us." If we are obliged to follow a writer with much care, to pause, and to read over his sentences a second time, in order to comprehend them fully, he will never please us long. Mankind are too indolent to relish so much labour. They may pretend to admire the author's depth after they have discovered his meaning; but they will seldom be inclined to take up his work a second time.

Authors sometimes plead the difficulty of their subject as an excuse for the want of Perspicuity. But the excuse can rarely, if ever, be admitted. For whatever a man conceives clearly, that it is in his power, if he will be at the trouble, to put into distinct propositions, or to express clearly to others: and upon no subject ought any man to write, where he cannot think clearly. His ideas, indeed, may, very excuseably, be on some subjects incomplete or inadequate; but still as far as they go, they ought to be clear; and, wherever this is the case, Perspicuity in expressing them is always attainable. The obscurity which reigns so much among many metaphysical writers, is, for the most part, owing to the indistinctness of their own conceptions. They see the object but in a confused light; and of course, can never exhibit it in a clear one to others.

Perspicuity in writing is not to be considered as merely a sort of negative virtue, or freedom from defect. It has higher merit: it is a degree of positive beauty. We are pleased with an author, we consider him as deserving praise, who frees us from all fatigue of searching for his meaning; who carries us through his subject without any embarrassment or confusion; whose style flows always like a limpid stream, where we see to the very bottom.

Blair.

§ 6. *On* PURITY *and* PROPRIETY.

Purity and Propriety of Language, are often used indiscriminately for each other; and, indeed, they are very nearly allied. A distinction, however, obtains between them. Purity is the use of such words, and such constructions, as belong to the idiom of the Language which we speak; in opposition to words and phrases that are imported from other Languages, or that are obsolete, or new-coined, or used without proper authority. Propriety is the selection of such words in the Language, as the best and most established usage has appropriated to those ideas which we intend to express by them. It implies the correct and happy application of them, according to that usage, in opposition to vulgarisms, or low expressions; and to words and phrases which would be less significant of the ideas that we mean to convey. Style may be pure, that is, it may all be strictly English, without Scotticisms or Gallicisms, or ungrammatical, irregular expressions of any kind, and may, nevertheless, be deficient in propriety. The words may be ill-chosen; not adapted to the subject, nor fully expressive of the author's sense. He has taken all his words and phrases from the general mass of English Language; but he has made his selection among these words unhappily. Whereas Style cannot be proper without being also pure; and where both Purity and Propriety meet, besides making Style perspicuous, they also render it graceful. There is no standard, either of Purity or of Propriety, but the practice of the best writers and speakers in the country.

When I mention obsolete or new-coined words as incongruous with Purity of Style, it will be easily understood, that some exceptions are to be made. On certain occasions, they may have grace. Poetry admits of greater latitude than prose, with respect to coining, or, at least, new-compounding words; yet, even here, this liberty should be used with a sparing hand. In prose, such innovations are more hazardous, and have a worse effect. They are apt to give Style an affected and conceited air; and should never be ventured upon except by such, whose established reputation gives them some degree of dictatorial power over Language.

The introduction of foreign and learned words, unless where necessity requires them, should always be avoided. Barren Languages may need such assistances; but ours is not one of these. Dean Swift, one of our most correct writers, valued himself much on using no words but such as were of native growth; and his Language, may, indeed, be considered as a standard of the strictest Purity and Propriety in the choice of words. At present, we seem to be departing from this standard. A multitude of Latin words have, of late, been poured in upon us. On some occasions, they give an appearance of elevation and dignity to Style. But often, also, they render it stiff and forced: and, in general, a plain native Style, as it is more intelligible to all readers, so, by a proper management of words, it may be made equally strong and expressive with this Latinized English. *Blair.*

§ 7. *On* PRECISION.

The exact import of Precision may be drawn from the etymology of the word. It comes from "precidere," to cut off; it imports retrenching all superfluities, and pruning the expression so as to exhibit neither more nor less than an exact copy of his idea who uses it. I observed before, that it is often difficult to separate the qualities of Style from the qualities of Thought; and it is found so in this instance. For in order to write with Precision, though this be properly a quality of Style, one must possess a very considerable degree of distinctness and accuracy in his manner of thinking.

The words, which a man uses to express his ideas, may be faulty in three respects: They may either not express that idea which the author intends, but some other which only resembles, or is a-kin to it; or, they may express that idea, but not quite fully and completely; or, they may express it together with something more than he intends. Precision stands opposed to all these three faults; but chiefly to the last. In an author's writing with propriety, his being free from the two former faults seems implied. The words which he uses are proper; that is, they express that idea which he intends, and they express it fully; but to be Precise, signifies that they express that idea, and no more. There is nothing in his words which introduces any foreign idea, any superfluous, unseasonable accessory, so as to mix it confusedly with the principal object, and thereby to render our conception of that object loose and indistinct. This requires a writer to have, himself, a very clear apprehension of the object he means to present to us; to have laid fast hold of it in his mind; and never to waver in any one view he takes of it; a perfection to which, indeed, few writers attain. *Ibid.*

§ 8. *On the use and importance of Precision.*

The use and importance of precision, may be deduced from the nature of the human mind. It never can view, clearly and distinctly, above one object at a time. If it must look at two or three together, especially objects among which there is resemblance or connexion, it finds itself confused and embarrassed. It cannot clearly perceive in what they agree, and in what they differ. Thus were any object, suppose some animal, to be presented to me, of whose structure I wanted to form a distinct notion, I would desire all its trappings to be taken off, I would require it to be brought before me by itself, and to stand alone, that there might be nothing to distract my attention. The same is the case with words. If, when you would inform me of your meaning, you also tell me more than what conveys it; if you join foreign circumstances to the principal object; if, by unnecessarily varying the expression, you shift the point of view, and make me see sometimes the object itself, and sometimes another thing that is connected with it; you thereby oblige me to look on several objects at once, and I lose sight of the principal. You load the animal you are showing me with so many trappings and collars, and bring so many of the same species before me, somewhat resembling, and yet somewhat differing, that I see none of them clearly.

This forms what is called a Loose Style: and is the proper opposite to Precision. It generally arises from using a superfluity of words. Feeble writers employ a multitude of words, to make themselves understood, as they think, more distinctly; and they only confound the reader. They are sensible of not having caught the precise expression, to convey what they would signify; they do not, indeed, conceive their own meaning very precisely themselves; and, therefore, help it out, as they can, by this and the other word, which may, as they suppose, supply the defect, and bring you somewhat nearer to their idea: they are always going about it, and about it, but never just hit the thing. The image, as they set it before you, is always seen double; and no double image is distinct. When an author tells me of his hero's *courage* in the day of battle, the expression is precise, and I understand it fully. But if, from the desire of multiplying words, he will needs praise his *courage* and *fortitude;* at the moment he joins these words together, my idea begins to waver. He means to express one quality more strongly; but he is, in truth, expressing two. *Courage* resists danger; *fortitude* supports pain. The occasion of exerting each of these qualities is different; and being led to think of both together, when only one of them should be in my view, my view is rendered unsteady, and my conception of the object indistinct.

From what I have said, it appears that an author may, in a qualified sense, be perspicuous, while yet he is far from being precise. He uses proper words, and proper arrangement; he gives you the idea as clear as he conceives it himself; and so far he is perspicuous; but the ideas are not very clear in his own mind: they are loose and general; and, therefore, cannot be expressed with Precision. All subjects do not equally require Precision. It is sufficient on many occasions, that we have a general view of the meaning. The subject, perhaps, is of the known and familiar kind; and we are in no hazard of mistaking the sense of the author, though every word which he uses be not precise and exact.

Blair.

§ 9. *The Causes of a Loose* STYLE.

The great source of a Loose Style, in opposition to Precision, is the injudicious use of those words termed Synonymous. They are called Synonymous, because they agree in expressing one principal idea: but, for the most part, if not always, they express it with some diversity in the circumstances. They are varied by some accessory idea which every word introduces, and which forms the distinction between them. Hardly, in any Language, are there two words that convey precisely the same idea; a person thoroughly conversant in the propriety of the Language, will always be able to observe something that distinguishes them. As they are like different shades of the same colour, an accurate writer can employ them to great advantage, by using them so as to heighten and finish the picture which he gives us. He supplies by one, what was wanting in the other, to the force, or to the lustre of the image which he means to exhibit. But in order to this end, he must be extremely attentive to the choice which he makes of them. For the bulk of writers are very apt to confound them with each other: and to employ them carelessly, merely for the sake of filling up a period, or of rounding and diversifying the Language, as if the signification were exactly the same, while, in truth, it is not. Hence a certain mist, and indistinctness, is unwarily thrown over Style.

Blair.

§ 10. *On the general Characters of* STYLE.

That different subjects require to be treated of in different sorts of Style, is a position so obvious, that I shall not stay to illustrate it. Every one sees that Treatises of Philosophy, for instance, ought not to be composed in the same Style with Orations. Every one sees also, that different parts of the same composition require a variation in the Style and manner. In a sermon, for instance, or any harangue, the application or peroration admits of more ornament, and requires more warmth, than the didactic part. But what I mean at present to remark is, that, amidst this variety, we still expect to find, in the compositions of any one man, some degree of uniformity or consistency with himself in manner; we expect to find some predominant character of Style impressed on all his writings, which shall be suited to, and shall mark, his particular genius, and turn of mind. The orations in Livy differ much in Style, as they ought to do, from the rest of his history. The same is the case with those in Tacitus. Yet both in Livy's orations, and in those of Tacitus, we are able clearly to trace the distinguishing manner of each historian: the magnificent fulness of the one, and the sententious conciseness of the other. The "Lettres Persanes," and "L'Esprit de Loix," are the works of the same author. They required very different composition surely, and accordingly they differ widely; yet still we see the same hand. Wherever there is real and native genius, it gives a determination to one kind of Style rather than another. Where nothing of this appears; where there is no marked nor peculiar character in the compositions of any author, we are apt to infer, not without reason, that he is a vulgar and trivial author, who writes from imitation, and not from the impulse of original genius. As the most celebrated painters are known by their hand; so the best and most original writers are known and distinguished, throughout all their works, by their Style and peculiar manner. This will be found to hold almost without exception.

Ibid.

§ 11. *On the Concise* STYLE.

One of the first and most obvious distinctions of the different kinds of Style, is what arises from an author's spreading out his thoughts more or less. This distinction forms what are called the Diffuse and the Concise Styles. A concise writer compresses his thought into the fewest possible words; he seeks to employ none but such as are most expressive; he lops off, as redundant, every expression which does not add something material to the sense. Ornament he does not reject; he may be lively and figured; but his ornament is intended for the sake of force rather than grace. He never gives you the same thought twice. He places it in the light which appears to him the most striking; but if you do not apprehend it well in that light, you need not expect to find it in any other. His sentences are arranged with compactness and strength, rather than with cadence and harmony. The utmost precision is studied in them; and they are commonly designed to suggest more to the reader's imagination than they directly express. *Blair.*

§ 12. *On the Diffuse* STYLE.

A diffuse writer unfolds his thought fully. He places it in a variety of lights, and gives the reader every possible assistance for understanding it completely. He is not very careful to express it at first in its full strength, because he is to repeat the impression; and what he wants in strength, he proposes to supply by copiousness. Writers of this character generally love magnificence and amplification. Their periods naturally run out into some length, and having room for ornament of every kind, they admit it freely.

Each of these manners has its peculiar advantages; and each becomes faulty when carried to the extreme. The extreme of conciseness becomes abrupt and obscure; it is apt also to lead into a Style too pointed, and bordering on the epigrammatic. The extreme of diffuseness becomes weak and languid, and tires the reader. However, to one or other of these two manners a writer may lean, according as his genius prompts him: and under the general character of a concise, or of a more open and diffuse Style, may possess much beauty in his composition.

For illustrations of these general characters, I can only refer to the writers who are examples of them. It is not so much from detached passages, such as I was wont formerly to quote for instances, as from the current of an author's Style that we are to collect the idea of a formed manner of writing. The two most remarkable examples that I know, of conciseness carried as far as propriety will allow, perhaps in some cases farther, are Tacitus the Historian, and the President Montesquieu in "L'Esprit de Loix." Aristotle too holds an eminent rank among didactic writers for his brevity. Perhaps no writer in the world was ever so frugal of his words as Aristotle; but this frugality of expression frequently darkens his meaning. Of a beautiful and magnificent diffuseness, Cicero, is, beyond doubt, the most illustrious instance that can be given. Addison, also, and Sir William Temple, come in some degree under this class. *Ibid.*

§ 13. *On the Nervous and the Feeble* STYLE.

The Nervous and the Feeble, are generally held to be characters of Style, of the same import with the Concise and the Diffuse. They do indeed very often coincide. Diffuse writers have, for the most part, some degree of feebleness; and nervous writers will generally be inclined to a concise expression. This, however, does not always hold; and there are instances of writers, who, in the midst of a full and ample Style, have maintained a great degree of strength. Livy is an example; and in the English language Dr. Barrow. Barrow's Style has many faults. It is unequal, incorrect, and redundant; but withal, for force and expressiveness uncommonly distinguished. On every subject, he multiplies words with an overflowing copiousness; but it is always a torrent of strong ideas and significant expressions which he pours forth. Indeed, the foundations of a nervous or a weak Style are laid in an author's manner of thinking. If he conceives an object strongly, he will express it with energy: but, if he has only an indistinct view of his subject; if his ideas be loose and wavering; if his genius be such, or, at the time of his writing, so carelessly exerted, that he has no firm hold of the conception which he would communicate to us; the marks of all this will clearly appear in his Style. Several unmeaning words and loose epithets will be found; his expressions will be vague and general; his arrangement indistinct and feeble; we shall conceive somewhat of his meaning, but our conception will be faint. Whereas a nervous writer, whether he employs an extended or a concise Style, gives us always a strong impression of his meaning; his mind is full of his subject, and his words are all expressive: every phrase and every figure which he uses, tends to render the picture, which he would set before us, more lively and complete. *Blair.*

§ 14. *On Harshness of* STYLE.

As every good quality in Style has an extreme, when pursued to which it becomes faulty, this holds of the Nervous Style as well as others. Too great a study of strength, to the neglect of the other qualities of Style, is found to betray writers into a harsh manner. Harshness arises from unusual words, from forced inversions in the construction of a sentence, and too much neglect of smoothness and ease. This is reckoned the fault of some of our earliest classics in the English Language; such as Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Bacon, Hooker, Chillingworth, Milton in his prose works, Harrington, Cudworth, and other writers of considerable note in the days of Queen Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I. These writers had nerves and strength in a high degree, and are to this day eminent for that quality in Style. But the language in their hands was exceedingly different from what it is now, and was indeed entirely formed upon the idiom and construction of the Latin in the arrangement of sentences. Hooker, for instance, begins the Preface to his celebrated work of Ecclesiastical Polity with the following sentence: "Though for no other cause, yet for this, that posterity may know we have not loosely, through silence, permitted things to pass away as in dream, there shall be, for men's information, extant this much, concerning the present state of the church of God established amongst us, and their careful endeavours which would have upheld the same." Such a sentence now sounds harsh in our ears. Yet some advantages certainly attended this sort of Style; and whether we have gained, or lost, upon the whole, by departing from it, may bear a question. By the freedom of arrangement, which it permitted, it rendered the language susceptible of more strength, of more variety of collocation, and more harmony of period. But however this be, such a Style is now obsolete; and no modern writer could adopt it without the censure of harshness and affectation. The present form which the Language has assumed, has in some measure, sacrificed the study of strength to that of perspicuity and ease. Our arrangement of words has become less forcible, perhaps, but more plain and natural; and this is now understood to be the genius of our Language. *Ibid.*

§ 15. *On the Dry* STYLE.

The dry manner excludes all ornament of every kind. Content with being understood, it has not the least aim to please either the fancy or the ear. This is tolerable only in pure didactic writing; and even there, to make us bear it, great weight and solidity of matter is requisite; and entire perspicuity of language. Aristotle is the complete example of a Dry Style. Never, perhaps, was there any author who adhered so rigidly to the strictness of a didactic manner, throughout all his writings, and conveyed so much instruction, without the least approach to ornament. With the most profound genius, and extensive views, he writes like a pure intelligence, who addresses himself solely to the understanding, without making any use of the channel of the imagination. But this is a manner which deserves not to be imitated. For, although the goodness of the matter may compensate the dryness or harshness of the Style, yet is that dryness a considerable defect; as it fatigues attention, and conveys our sentiments, with disadvantage, to the reader or hearer.

Blair.

§ 16. *On the Plain* STYLE.

A Plain Style rises one degree above a dry one. A writer of this character employs very little ornament of any kind, and rests almost entirely upon his sense. But, if he is at no pains to engage us by the employment of figures, musical arrangement, or any other art of writing, he studies, however, to avoid disgusting us, like a dry and a harsh writer. Besides Perspicuity, he pursues Propriety, Purity, and Precision, in his language: which form one degree, and no inconsiderable one, of beauty. Liveliness too, and force, may be consistent with a very Plain Style: and, therefore, such an author, if his sentiments be good, may be abundantly agreeable. The difference between a dry and plain writer, is that the former is incapable of ornament, and seems not to know what it is; the latter seeks not after it. He gives us his meaning, in good language, distinct and pure; any further ornament he gives himself no trouble about, either, because he thinks it unnecessary to his subject, or, because his genius does not lead him to delight in it; or, because it leads him to despise it.

This last was the case with Dean Swift, who may be placed at the head of those that have employed the Plain Style. Few writers have discovered more capacity. He treats every subject which he handles, whether serious or ludicrous, in a masterly manner. He knew, almost beyond any man, the Purity, the Extent, the Precision of the English Language; and, therefore, to such as wish to attain a pure and correct Style, he is one of the most useful models. But we must not look for much ornament and grace in his Language. His haughty and morose genius made him despise any embellishment of this kind, as beneath his dignity. He delivers his sentiments in a plain, downright, positive manner, like one who is sure he is in the right; and is very indifferent whether you be pleased or not. His sentences are commonly negligently arranged; distinctly enough as to the sense, but without any regard to smoothness of sound; often without much regard to compactness or elegance. If a metaphor, or any other figure, chanced to render his satire more poignant, he would, perhaps, vouchsafe to adopt it when it came in his way; but if it tended only to embellish and illustrate, he would rather throw it aside. Hence, in his serious pieces, his style often borders upon the dry and unpleasing; in his humorous ones, the plainness of his manner sets off his wit to the highest advantage. There is no froth nor affectation in it; it seems native and unstudied; and while he hardly appears to smile himself, he makes his reader laugh heartily. To a writer of such a genius as Dean Swift, the Plain Style was most admirably fitted. Among our philosophical writers, Mr. Locke comes under this class; perspicuous and pure, but almost without any ornament whatever. In works which admit, or require, ever so much ornament, there are parts where the plain manner ought to predominate. But we must remember, that when this is the character which a writer affects throughout his whole composition, great weight of matter, and great force of sentiment, are required, in order to keep up the reader's attention, and prevent him from becoming tired of the author.

Blair.

§ 17. *On the Neat* STYLE.

What is called a Neat Style comes next in order; and here we are got into the region of ornament; but that ornament not of the highest or most sparkling kind. A writer of this character shows that he does not despise the beauty of language. It is an object of his attention. But his attention is shown in the choice of his words, and in a graceful collocation of them; rather than in any high efforts of imagination, or eloquence. His sentences are always clean, and free from the incumbrance of superfluous words; of a moderate length; rather inclining to brevity, than a swelling structure; closing with propriety; without any tails, or adjections dragging after the proper close. His cadence is varied; but not of the studied musical kind. His figures, if he uses any, are short and correct; rather than bold and glowing. Such a Style as this may be attained by a writer who has no great powers of fancy or genius, by industry merely, and careful attention to the rules of writing; and it is a Style always agreeable. It imprints a character of moderate elevation on our composition, and carries a decent degree of ornament, which is not unsuitable to any subject whatever. A familiar letter, or a law paper, on the driest subject, may be written with neatness; and a sermon, or a philosophical treatise, in a Neat Style, will be read with pleasure.

Ibid.

§ 18. *On an Elegant* STYLE.

An Elegant Style is a character, expressing a higher degree of ornament than a neat one; and, indeed, is the term usually applied to Style, when possessing all the virtues of ornament, without any of its excesses or defects. From what has been formerly delivered, it will easily be understood, that complete Elegance implies great perspicuity and propriety; purity in the choice of words, and care and dexterity in their harmonious and happy arrangement. It implies farther, the grace and beauty of imagination spread over Style, as far as the subject admits it; and all the illustration which figurative language adds, when properly employed. In a word, an elegant writer is one who pleases the fancy and the ear, while he informs the understanding; and who gives us his ideas clothed with all the beauty of expression, but not overcharged with any of its misplaced finery. In this class, therefore, we place only the first rate writers in the language; such as Addison, Dryden, Pope, Temple, Bolingbroke, Atterbury, and a few more; writers who differ widely from one another in many of the attributes of Style, but whom we now class together, under the denomination of Elegant, as, in the scale of Ornament, possessing nearly the same place.

Ibid.

§ 19. *On the Florid* STYLE.

When the ornaments, applied to Style, are too rich and gaudy in proportion to the subject; when they return upon us too fast, and strike us either with a dazzling lustre, or a false brilliancy, this forms what is called a Florid Style; a term commonly used to signify the excess of ornament. In a young composer this is very pardonable. Perhaps, it is even a promising symptom, in young people, that their Style should incline to the Florid and Luxuriant: "In youth," says Quinctilian, "I wish to see luxuriancy of fancy appear. Much of it will be diminished by years; much will be corrected by ripening judgment; some of it, by the mere practice of composition, will be worn away. Let there be only sufficient matter, at first, that can bear some pruning and lopping off. At this time of life, let genius be bold and inventive, and pride itself in its efforts, though these should not, as yet, be correct. Luxuriancy can easily be cured; but for barrenness there is no remedy." But, although the Florid Style may be allowed to youth, in their first essays, it must not receive the same indulgence from writers of maturer years. It is to be expected, that judgment, as it ripens, should chasten imagination, and reject, as juvenile, all such ornaments as are redundant, unsuitable to the subject, or not conducive to illustrate it. Nothing can be more contemptible than that tinsel splendour of language, which some writers perpetually affect. It were well, if this could be ascribed to the real overflowing of a rich imagination. We should then have something to amuse us, at least if we found little to instruct us. But the worst is, that with those frothy writers, it is a luxuriancy of words, not of fancy. We see a laboured attempt to rise to a splendour of composition, of which they have formed to themselves some loose idea; but having no strength of genius for attaining it, they endeavour to supply the defect by poetical words, by cold exclamations, by common-place figures, and every thing that has the appearance of pomp and magnificence. It has escaped these writers, that sobriety in ornament, is one great secret for rendering it pleasing; and that without a foundation of good sense, and solid thought, the most Florid Style is but a childish imposition on the Public. The Public, however, are but too apt to be so imposed on; at least, the mob of readers; who are very ready to be caught, at first, with whatever is dazzling and gaudy.

I cannot help thinking, that it reflects more honour on the religious turn, and good dispositions of the present age, than on the public taste, that Mr. Hervey's Meditations have had so great a currency. The pious and benevolent heart, which is always displayed in them, and the lively fancy which, on some occasions, appears, justly merited applause; but the perpetual glitter of expression, the swoln imagery, and strained description which abound in them, are ornaments of a false kind. I would, therefore, advise students of oratory to imitate Mr. Hervey's piety, rather than his Style; and, in all compositions of a serious kind, to turn their attention, as Mr. Pope says, "from sounds to things, from fancy to the heart." Admonitions of this kind I have already had occasion to give, and may hereafter repeat them; as I conceive nothing more incumbent on me, in this course of Lectures, than to take every opportunity of cautioning my readers against the affected and frivolous use of ornament; and, instead of that slight and superficial taste in writing, which I apprehend to be at present too fashionable, to introduce, as far as my endeavours can avail, a taste for more solid thought, and more manly simplicity in Style. *Blair.*

§ 20. *On the different Kinds of* SIMPLICITY.

The first is, Simplicity of Composition, as opposed to too great a variety of parts. Horace's precept refers to this:

> Denique sit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum.*

This is the simplicity of plan in a tragedy, as distinguished from double plots, and crowded incidents; the Simplicity of the Iliad, or Æneid, in opposition to the digressions of Lucan, and the scattered tales of Ariosto; the Simplicity of Grecian architecture, in opposition to the irregular variety of the Gothic. In this sense, Simplicity is the same with Unity.

The second sense is, Simplicity of Thought, as opposed to refinement. Simple thoughts are what arise naturally; what the occasion or the subject suggest unsought: and what, when once suggested, are easily apprehended by all. Refinement in writing expresses a less natural and obvious train of thought, and which it required a peculiar turn of genius to pursue; within certain bounds very beautiful; but when carried too far, approaching to intricacy, and hurting us by the appearance of being *recherché*, or far-sought. Thus, we would naturally say, that Mr. Parnell is a poet of far greater simplicity, in his turn of thought, than Mr. Cowley; Cicero's thoughts on moral subjects are natural; Seneca's too refined and laboured. In these two senses of Simplicity, when it is opposed either to variety of parts, or to refinement of thought, it has no proper relation to Style.

There is a third sense of Simplicity, in which it has respect to Style; and stands opposed to too much ornament, or pomp of language; as when we say, Mr. Locke is a simple, Mr. Hervey, a florid writer; and it is in this sense, that the "*simplex,*" the "*tenue,*" or "*subtile genus dicendi,*" is understood by Cicero and Quinctilian. The simple style, in this sense, coincides with the plain or the neat style, which I before mentioned; and therefore, requires no farther illustration.

But there is a fourth sense of Simplicity also respecting Style; but not respecting the degree of ornament employed, so much as the easy and natural manner in which our language expresses our thoughts. This is quite different from the former sense of the word just now mentioned, in which Simplicity was equivalent to Plainness: whereas, in this sense, it is compatible with the highest ornament. Homer, for instance, possesses this Simplicity in the greatest perfection; and yet no writer has more ornament and beauty. This Simplicity, which is what we are now to consider, stands opposed, not to ornament, but to affectation of ornament, or appearance of labour about our Style; and it is a distinguishing excellency in writing. *Ibid.*

§ 21. *Simplicity the Characteristic of* TILLOTSON'S *Style.*

Simplicity is the great beauty of Archbishop Tillotson's manner. Tillotson has long been admired as an eloquent writer, and a model for preaching. But his eloquence, if we can call it such, has been often misunderstood. For if we include in the idea of eloquence, vehemence and strength, picturesque description, glowing figures, or correct arrangement of sentences, in all these parts of oratory the Archbishop is exceedingly deficient. His Style is always pure, indeed, and perspicuous, but careless and remiss, too often feeble and languid; little beauty in the construction of his sentences, which are frequently suffered to drag unharmoniously; seldom any attempt towards strength or sublimity. But, notwithstanding these defects, such a constant vein of good sense and piety runs through his works, such an earnest and serious manner, and so much useful instruction, conveyed in a Style so pure, natural, and unaffected, as will justly recommend him to high regard, as long as the English language remains; not, indeed, as a model of the highest eloquence, but as a simple and amiable writer, whose manner is strongly expressive of great goodness and worth. I observed, before, that Simplicity of manner may be consistent with some degree of negligence in Style; and it is only the beauty of that Simplicity which makes the negligence of such writers seem graceful. But, as appears in the Archbishop, negligence may sometimes be carried so far as to impair the beauty of Simplicity, and make it border on a flat and languid manner. *Blair.*

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* "Then learn the wand'ring humour to control,
"And keep one equal tenor through the whole." *Francis.*

§ 22. *Simplicity of Sir* WILLIAM TEMPLE'S *Style.*

Sir William Temple is another remarkable writer in the Style of Simplicity. In point of ornament and correctness, he rises a degree above Tillotson; though, for correctness, he is not in the highest rank. All is easy and flowing in him; he is exceedingly harmonious; smoothness, and what may be called amenity, are the distinguishing characters of his manner; relaxing, sometimes, as such a manner will naturally do, into a prolix and remiss Style. No writer whatever has stamped upon his Style a more lively impression of his own character. In reading his works, we seem engaged in conversation with him; we become thoroughly acquainted with him, not merely as an author, but as a man; and contract a friendship for him. He may be classed as standing in the middle, between a negligent Simplicity and the highest degree of Ornament which this character of Style admits. *Ibid.*

§ 23. *Simplicity of Mr.* ADDISON'S *Style.*

Of the latter of these, the highest, most correct, and ornamented degree of the simple manner, Mr. Addison is beyond doubt, in the English language, the most perfect example: and therefore, though not without some faults, he is, on the whole, the safest model for imitation, and the freest from considerable defects, which the language affords. Perspicuous and pure he is in the highest degree; his precision, indeed, not very great; yet nearly as great as the subjects which he treats of require: the construction of his sentences easy, agreeable, and commonly very musical; carrying a character of smoothness, more than of strength. In figurative language he is rich, particularly in similes and metaphors; which are so employed, as to render his Style splendid without being gaudy. There is not the least affectation in his manner; we see no marks of labour; nothing forced or constrained; but great elegance joined with great ease and simplicity. He is, in particular, distinguished by a character of modesty and of politeness, which appears in all his writings. No author has a more popular and insinuating manner; and the great regard which he every where shows for virtue and religion, recommends him highly. If he fails in any thing, it is in want of strength and precision, which renders his manner, though perfectly suited to such essays as he writes in the Spectator, not altogether a proper model for any of the higher and more elaborate kinds of composition. Though the public have ever done much justice to his merit, yet the nature of his merit has not always been seen in its true light: for, though his poetry be elegant, he certainly bears a higher rank among the prose writers, than he is entitled to among the poets; and, in prose, his humour is of a much higher and more original strain than his philosophy. The character of Sir Roger de Coverley discovers more genius than the critique on Milton. *Blair.*

§ 24. *Lord* Shaftsbury *deficient in Simplicity of Style.*

Of authors who, notwithstanding many excellencies, have rendered their Style much less beautiful by want of Simplicity, I cannot give a more remarkable example than Lord Shaftsbury. This is an author on whom I have made observations several times before; and shall now take leave of him, with giving his general character under this head. Considerable merit, doubtless, he has. His works might be read with profit for the moral philosophy which they contain, had he not filled them with so many oblique and invidious insinuations against the Christian Religion; thrown out, too, with so much spleen and satire, as do no honour to his memory, either as an author or a man. His language has many beauties. It is firm and supported in an uncommon degeee: it is rich and musical. No English author, as I formerly showed, has attended so much to the regular construction of his sentences, both with respect to propriety, and with respect to cadence. All this gives so much elegance and pomp to his language, that there is no wonder it should have been sometimes highly admired. It is greatly hurt, however, by perpetual stiffness and affectation. This is its capital fault. His lordship can express nothing with Simplicity. He seems to have considered it as vulgar, and beneath the dignity of a man of quality to speak like other men. Hence he is ever in buskins; full of circumlocutions and artificial elegance. In every sentence, we see the marks of labour and art; nothing of that ease which expresses a sentiment coming natural and warm from the heart. Of figures and ornament of every kind, he is exceedingly fond; sometimes happy in them; but his fondness for them is too visible; and having once laid hold of some metaphor or allusion that pleased him, he knows not how to part with it. What is most wonderful, he was a professed admirer of Simplicity; is always extolling it in the ancients, and censuring the moderns for the want of it; though he departs from it himself as far as any one modern whatever. Lord Shaftsbury possessed delicacy and refinement of taste, to a degree that we may call excessive and sickly; but he had little warmth of passion; few strong or vigorous feelings; and the coldness of his character led him to that artificial and stately manner which appears in his writings. He was fonder of nothing than of wit and raillery; but he is far from being happy in it. He attempts it often, but always awkwardly; he is stiff, even in his pleasantry; and laughs in form, like an author, and not like a man.*

From the account which I have

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* It may, perhaps, be not unworthy of being mentioned, that the first edition of his Inquiry into Virtue was published, surreptitiously I believe, in a separate form, in the year 1699; and is sometimes, to be met with; by comparing which with the corrected edition of the same treatise, as it now stands among his works, we see one of the most curious and useful examples, that I know, of what is called *Limæ Labor;* the art of polishing language, breaking long sentences, and working up an imperfect draught into a highly-finished performance.

given of Lord Shaftsbury's manner, it may easily be imagined, that he would mislead many who blindly admired him. Nothing is more dangerous to the tribe of imitators, than an author, who with many imposing beauties, has also some very considerable blemishes. This is fully exemplified in Mr. Blackwall of Aberdeen, the author of the Life of Homer, the Letters on Mythology, and the Court of Augustus: a writer of considerable learning, and of ingenuity also; but infected with an extravagant love of an artificial Style, and of that parade of language which distinguishes the Shaftsburean manner.

Having now said so much to recommend Simplicity, or the easy and natural manner of writing, and having pointed out the defects of an opposite manner; in order to prevent mistakes on this subject, it is necessary for me to observe, that it is very possible for an author to write simply, and yet not beautifully. One may be free from affectation, and not have merit. The beautiful Simplicity supposes an author to possess real genius; to write with solidity, purity, and liveliness of imagination. In this case, the simplicity or unaffectedness of his manner, is the crowning ornament; it heightens every other beauty; it is the dress of nature, without which all beauties are imperfect. But if mere unaffectedness were sufficient to constitute the beauty of Style, weak, trifling, and dull writers might often lay claim to this beauty. And accordingly we frequently meet with pretended critics, who extol the dullest writers on account of what they call the "Chaste Simplicity of their manner;" which, in truth, is no other than the absence of every ornament, through the mere want of genius and imagination. We must distinguish, therefore, between that Simplicity which accompanies true genius, and which is perfectly compatible with every proper ornament of Style; and that which is no other than a careless and slovenly manner. Indeed the distinction is easily made from the effect produced. The one never fails to interest the reader; the other is insipid and tiresome. *Blair.*

§ 25. *On the Vehement* STYLE.

I proceed to mention one other manner or character of Style, different from any that I have yet spoken of; which may be distinguished by the name of the Vehement. This always implies strength; and is not, by any means, inconsistent with Simplicity; but, in its predominant character, is distinguishable from either the strong or the simple manner. It has a peculiar ardour; it is a glowing Style; the language of a man, whose imagination and passions are heated, and strongly affected by what he writes; who is therefore negligent of lesser graces, but pours himself forth with the rapidity and fulness of a torrent. It belongs to the higher kinds of oratory; and indeed is rather expected from a man who is speaking, than from one who is writing in his closet. The orations of Demosthenes furnish the full and perfect example of this species of Style. *Ibid.*

§ 26. *Lord* BOLINGBROKE *excelled in the Vehement Style.*

Among English writers, the one who has most of this character, though mixed indeed, with several defects, is Lord Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke was formed by nature to be a factious leader; the demagogue of a popular assembly. Accordingly, the Style that runs through all his political writings, is that of one declaiming with heat, rather than writing with deliberation. He abounds in rhetorical figures; and pours himself forth with great impetuosity. He is copious to a fault; places the same thought before us in many different views; but generally with life and ardour. He is bold, rather than correct; a torrent that flows strong, but often muddy. His sentences are varied as to length and shortness; inclining, however, most to long periods, sometimes including parentheses, and frequently crowding and heaping a multitude of things upon one another, as naturally happens in the warmth of speaking. In the choice of his words, there is great felicity and precision. In exact construction of sentences, he is much inferior to Lord Shaftsbury; but greatly superior to him in life and ease. Upon the whole, his merit, as a writer, would have been very considerable, if his matter had equalled his Style. But whilst we find many things to commend in the latter, in the former, as I before remarked, we can hardly find any thing to commend. In his reasonings, for the most part, he is slimsy and false; in his political writings, factious: in what he calls his philosophical ones, irreligious and sophistical in the highest degree. *Blair.*

§ 27. *Of the Rise of Poetry among the* ROMANS.

The Romans, in the infancy of their state, were entirely rude and unpolished. They came from shepherds; they were increased from the refuse of the nations around them; and their manners agreed with their original. As they lived wholly on tilling their ground at home, or on plunder from their neighbours, war was their business, and agriculture the chief art they followed. Long after this, when they had spread their conquests over a great part of Italy, and began to make a considerable figure in the world,—even their great men retained a roughness, which they raised into a virtue, by calling it Roman Spirit; and which might often much better have been called Roman Barbarity. It seems to me, that there was more of austerity than justice, and more of insolence than courage, in some of their most celebrated actions. However that be, this is certain, that they were at first a nation of soldiers and husbandmen: roughness was long an applauded character among them; and a sort of rusticity reigned, even in their senate-house.

In a nation originally of such a temper as this, taken up almost always in extending their territories, very often in settling the balance of power among themselves, and not unfrequently in both these at the same time, it was long before the politer arts made any appearance; and very long before they took root or flourished to any degree. Poetry was the first that did so; but such a poetry, as one might expect among a warlike, busied, unpolished people.

Not to inquire about the songs of triumph, mentioned even in Romulus's time, there was certainly something of poetry among them in the next reign under Numa: a prince, who pretended to converse with the Muses, as well as with Egeria; and who might possibly himself have made the verses which the Salian priests sung in his time. Pythagoras, either in the same reign, or if you please some time after, gave the Romans a tincture of poetry as well as of philosophy; for Cicero assures us, that the Pythagoreans made great use of poetry and music: and probably they, like our old Druids, delivered most of their precepts in verse. Indeed the chief employment of poetry, in that and the following ages, among the Romans, was of a religious kind. Their very prayers, and perhaps their whole liturgy, was poetical. They had also a sort of prophetic or sacred writers, who seem to have written generally in verse; and were so numerous, that there were above two thousand of their volumes remaining even to Augustus's time. They had a kind of plays too, in these early times, derived from what they had seen of the Tuscan actors, when sent for to Rome to expiate a plague that raged in the city. These seem to have been either like our dumb-shows, or else a kind of extempore farces; a thing to this day a good deal in use all over Italy, and in Tuscany. In a more particular manner add to these, that extempore kind of jesting dialogues begun at their harvest and vintage feasts; and carried on so rudely and abusively afterwards, as to occasion a very severe law to restrain their licentiousness—and those lovers of poetry and good eating, who seem to have attended the tables of the richer sort, much like the old provincial poets, or our own British bards, and sang there, to some instrument of music, the achievements of their ancestors, and the noble deeds of those who had gone before them, to inflame others to follow their great examples.

The names of almost all these poets sleep in peace with all their works; and, if we may take the word of the other Roman writers of a better age, it is no great loss to us. One of their best poets represents them as very obscure and very contemptible; one of their best historians avoids quoting them, as too barbarous for politer ears; and one of their most judicious emperors ordered the greatest part of their writings to be burnt, that the world might be troubled with them no longer.

All these poets therefore may very well be dropped in the account: there being nothing remaining of their works; and probably no merit to be found in them, if they had remained. And so we may date the beginning of the Roman poetry from Livius Andronicus, the first of their poets of whom any thing does remain to us; and from whom the Romans themselves seem to have dated the beginning of their poetry, even in the Augustan age.

The first kind of poetry that was followed with any success among the Romans, was that for the stage. They were a very religious people; and stage plays in those times made no inconsiderable part in their public devotions; it is hence, perhaps, that the greatest number of their oldest poets, of whom we have any remains, and indeed almost all of them, are dramatic poets. *Spence.*

§ 28. *Of* LIVIUS, NÆVIUS, *and* ENNIUS.

The foremost in this list, were Livius, Nævius, and Ennius. Livius's first play (and it was the first written play that ever appeared at Rome, whence perhaps Horace calls him Livius Scriptor) was acted in the 514th year from the building of the city. He seems to have got whatever reputation he had, rather as their first, than as a good writer; for Cicero, who admired these old poets more than they were afterwards admired, is forced to give up Livius; and says, that his pieces did not deserve a second reading. He was for some time the sole writer for the stage; till Nævius rose to rival him, and probably far exceeded his master. Nævius ventured too on an epic, or rather an historical poem, on the first Carthaginian war. Ennius followed his steps in this, as well as in the dramatic way; and seems to have excelled him as much as he had excelled Livius; so much at least, that Lucretius says of him, "That he was the first of their poets who deserved a lasting crown from the muses." These three poets were actors as well as poets; and seem all of them to have written whatever was wanted for the stage, rather than to have consulted their own turn or genius. Each of them published, sometimes tragedies, sometimes comedies, and sometimes a kind of dramatic satires; such satires, I suppose, as had been occasioned by the extempore poetry that had been in fashion the century before them. All the most celebrated dramatic writers of antiquity excel only in one kind. There is no tragedy of Terence, or Menander; and no comedy of Actius, or Euripides. But these first dramatic poets, among the Romans, attempted every thing indifferently; just as the present fancy, or the demand of the people, led them.

The quiet the Romans enjoyed after the second Punic war, when they had humbled their great rival Carthage; and their carrying on their conquests afterwards, without any great difficulties into Greece,—gave them leisure and opportunities for making very great improvements in their poetry. Their dramatic writers began to act with more steadiness and judgment; they followed one point of view: they had the benefit of the excellent patterns the Greek writers had set them; and formed themselves on those models.

Spence.

§ 29. *Of* PLAUTUS.

Plautus was the first that consulted his own genius, and confined himself to that species of dramatic writing, for which he was the best fitted by nature. Indeed, his comedy (like the old comedy at Athens) is of a ruder kind, and far enough from the polish that was afterwards given it among the Romans. His jests are often rough, and his wit coarse; but there is a strength and spirit in him, that make one read him with pleasure: at least, he is much to be commended for being the first that considered what he was most capable of excelling in, and not endeavouring to shine in too many different ways at once. Cæcilius followed his example in this particular; but improved their comedy so much beyond him, that he is named by Cicero, as perhaps the best of all the comic writers they ever had. This high character of him was not for his language, which is given up by Cicero himself as faulty and incorrect; but either for the dignity of his characters, or the strength and weight of his sentiments.

Ibid.

§ 30. *Of* TERENCE.

Terence made his first appearance when Cæcilius was in high reputation. It is said, that when he offered his first play to the Ediles, they sent him with it to Cæcilius for his judgment of the piece. Cæcilius was at supper when he came to him; and as Terence was dressed very meanly, he was placed on a little stool, and desired to read away; but upon his having read a very few lines only, Cæcilius altered his behaviour, and placed him next himself at the table. They all admired him as a rising genius; and the applause he received from the public, answered the compliments they had made him in private. His Eunuchus, in particular, was acted twice in one day; and he was paid more for that piece than ever had been given before for a comedy: and yet, by the way, it was not much above thirty pounds. We may see by that, and the rest of his plays which remain to us, to what a degree of exactness and elegance the Roman comedy was arrived in his time. There is a beautiful simplicity, which reigns through all his works. There is no searching after wit, and no ostentation of ornament in him. All his speakers seem to say just what they should say, and no more. The story is always going on; and goes on just as it ought. This whole age, long before Terence, and long after, is rather remarkable for strength than beauty in writing. Were we to compare it with the following age, the compositions of this would appear to those of the Augustan, as the Doric order in building if compared with the Corinthian; but Terence's work is to those of the Augustan age, as the Ionic is to the Corinthian order; it is not so ornamented, or so rich; but nothing can be more exact and pleasing. The Roman language itself, in his hands, seems to be improved beyond what one could ever expect; and to be advanced almost a hundred years forwarder than the times he lived in. There are some who look upon this as one of the strangest phenomena in the learned world; but it is a phenomenon which may be well enough explained from Cicero. He says, "that in several families the Roman language was spoken in perfection, even in those times;" and instances particularly in the families of the Lælii and the Scipios. Every one knows that Terence was extremely intimate in both these families: and as the language of his pieces is that of familiar conversation, he had indeed little more to do, than to write as they talked at their tables. Perhaps, too, he was obliged to Scipio and Lælius, for more than their bare conversations. That is not at all impossible; and indeed the Romans themselves seem generally to have imagined, that he was assisted by them in the writing part too. If it was really so, that will account still better for the elegance of the language in his plays: because Terence himself was born out of Italy: and though he was brought thither very young, he received the first part of his education in a family, where they might not speak with so much correctness as Lælius and Scipio had been used to from their very infancy. Thus much for the language of Terence's plays: as for the rest, it seems, from what he says himself, that his most usual method was to take his plans chiefly, and his characters wholly, from the Greek comic poets. Those who say that he translated all the comedies of Menander, certainly carry the matter too far. They were probably more than Terence ever wrote. Indeed this would be more likely to be true of Afranius than Terence; though I suppose, it would scarce hold, were we to take both of them together.

Spence.

§ 31. *Of* AFRANIUS.

We have a very great loss in the works of Afranius: for he was regarded, even in the Augustan age, as the most exact imitator of Menander. He owns himself, that he had no restraint in copying him; or any other of the Greek comic writers, wherever they set him a good example. Afranius's stories and persons were Roman, as Terence's were Grecian. This was looked upon as so material a point in those days, that it made two different species of comedy. Those on a Greek story were called Palliatæ; and those on a Roman Togatæ. Terence excelled all the Roman poets in the former, and Afranius in the latter.

Ibid.

§ 32. *Of* PACUVIUS *and* ACTIUS.

About the same time that comedy was improved so considerably, Pacuvius and Actius (one a contemporary of Terence, and the other of Afranius) carried tragedy as far towards perfection as it ever arrived in Roman hands. The step from Ennius to Pacuvius was a very great one; so great, that he was reckoned, in Cicero's time, the best of all their tragic poets. Pacuvius, as well as Terence, enjoyed the acquaintance and friendship of Lælius and Scipio: but he did not profit so much by it as to the improvement of his language. Indeed his style was not to be the common conversation style, as Terence's was; and all the stiffenings given to it, might take just as much from its elegance as they added to its dignity. What is remarkable in him, is, that he was almost as eminent for painting as he was for poetry. He made the decorations for his own plays; and Pliny speaks of some paintings by him, in a temple of Hercules, as the most celebrated work of their kind, done by any Roman of condition after Fabius Pictor. Actius began to publish when Pacuvius was leaving off: his language was not so fine, nor his verses so well turned, even as those of his predecessor. There is a remarkable story of him in an old critic, which, as it may give some light into their different manners of writing, may be worth relating. Pacuvius, in his old age, retired to Tarentum, to enjoy the soft air and mild winters of that place. As Actius was obliged, on some affairs, to make a journey into Asia, he took Tarentum in his way, and staid there some days with Pacuvius. It was in this visit that he read his tragedy of Atreus to him, and desired his opinion of it. Old Pacuvius, after hearing it out, told him very honestly, that the poetry was sonorous and majestic, but that it seemed to him too stiff and harsh. Actius replied, that he was himself very sensible of that fault in his writings; but that he was not at all sorry for it: "for," says he, "I have always been of opinion, that it is the same with writers as with fruits; among which those that are most soft and palatable, decay the soonest; whereas those of a rough taste last the longer, and have the finer relish, when once they come to be mellowed by time."—Whether this style ever came to be thus mellowed, I very much doubt; however that was, it is a point that seems generally allowed, that he and Pacuvius were the two best tragic poets the Romans ever had.

Spence.

§ 33. *Of the Rise of Satire: Of* Lucilius, Lucretius, *and* Catullus.

All this while, that is, for above one hundred years, the stage, as you see, was almost solely in possession of the Roman poets. It was now time for the other kinds of poetry to have their turn; however, the first that sprung up and flourished to any degree, was still a scion from the same root. What I mean, is Satire; the produce of the old comedy. This kind of poetry had been attempted in a different manner by some of the former writers, and in particular by Ennius: but it was so altered and so improved by Lucilius, that he was called the inventor of it. This was a kind of poetry wholly of the Roman growth; and the only one they had that was so; and even as to this, Lucilius improved a good deal by the side lights he borrowed from the old comedy at Athens. Not long after, Lucretius brought their poetry acquainted with philosophy; and Catullus began to show the Romans something of the excellence of the Greek lyric poets. Lucretius discovers a great deal of spirit wherever his subject will give him leave; and the first moment he steps a little aside from it, in all his digressions, he is fuller of life and fire, and appears to have been of a more poetical turn, than Virgil himself; which is partly acknowledged in the fine compliment the latter seems to pay him in his Georgics. His subject often obliges him to go on heavily for an hundred lines together · but wherever he breaks out, he breaks out like lightning from a dark cloud; all at once, with force and brightness. His character, in this, agrees with what is said of him: that a philtre he took had given him a frenzy, and that he wrote in his lucid intervals. He and Catullus wrote, when letters in general began to flourish at Rome much more than ever they had done. Catullus was too wise to rival him; and was the most admired of all his cotemporaries, in all the different ways of writing he attempted. His odes perhaps are the least valuable part of his works. The strokes of satire in his epigrams are very severe; and the descriptions in his Idylliums very full and picturesque. He paints strongly; but all his paintings have more of force than elegance, and put one more in mind of Homer than Virgil.

With these I shall choose to close the first age of the Roman poetry; an age more remarkable for strength than for refinement in writing. I have dwelt longer on it perhaps than I ought; but the order and succession of these poets wanted much to be settled: and I was obliged to say something of each of them, because I may have recourse to each on some occasion or another, in showing you my collection. All that remains to us of the poetical works of this age, are the miscellaneous poems of Catullus; the philosophical poem of Lucretius; six comedies by Terence; and twenty by Plautus. Of all the rest, there is nothing left us, except such passages from their works as happened to be quoted by the ancient writers, and particularly by Cicero and the old critics. *Spence.*

§ 34. *Of the flourishing State of Poetry among the* ROMANS.

The first age was only as the dawning of the Roman poetry, in comparison of the clear full light that opened all at once afterwards, under Augustus Cæsar. The state which had been so long tending towards a monarchy, was quite settled down to that form by this prince. When he had no longer any dangerous opponents, he grew mild, or at least concealed the cruelty of his temper. He gave peace and quiet to the people that were fallen into his hands; and looked kindly on the improvement of all the arts and elegancies of life among them. He had a minister too, under him, who (though a very bad writer himself) knew how to encourage the best; and who admitted the best poets, in particular, into a very great share of friendship and intimacy with him. Virgil was one of the foremost in this list; who, at his first setting out, grew soon their most applauded writer for genteel pastorals; then gave them the most beautiful and most correct poem that ever was written in the Roman language, in his rules of agriculture (so beautiful, that some of the ancients seem to accuse Virgil of having studied beauty too much in that piece); and last of all, undertook a political poem, in support of the new establishment. I have thought this to be the intent of the Æneid, ever since I first read Bossu; and the more one considers it, the more I think one is confirmed in that opinion. Virgil is said to have begun this poem the very year that Augustus was freed from his great rival Anthony; the government of the Roman empire was to be wholly in him: and though he chose to be called their father, he was, in every thing but the name, their king. This monarchical form of government must naturally be apt to displease the people. Virgil seems to have laid the plan of his poem to reconcile them to it. He takes advantage of their religious turn; and of some old prophecies that must have been very flattering to the Roman people, as promising them the empire of the whole world: he weaves this in with the most probable account of their origin, that of their being descended from the Trojans. To be a little more particular; Virgil, in his Æneid, shows that Æneas was called into their country by the express order of the gods; that he was made king of it, by the will of heaven, and by all the human rights that could be; that there was an uninterrupted succession of kings from him to Romulus; that his heirs were to reign there for ever; and that the Romans, under them, were to obtain the monarchy of the world. It appears from Virgil, and the other Roman writers, that Julius Cæsar was of the royal race, and that Augustus was his sole heir. The natural result of all this is, that the promises made to the Roman people, in and through this race, terminating in Augustus, the Romans, if they would obey the gods, and be masters of the world, were to yield obedience to the new establishment under that prince. As odd a scheme as this may seem now, it is scarce so odd as that of some people among us, who persuaded themselves, that an absolute obedience was owing to our kings, on their supposed descent from some unknown patriarch; and yet that had its effects with many, about a century ago; and seems not to have quite lost all its influence, even in our remembrance. However that be, I think it appears plain enough, that the two great points aimed at by Virgil in his Æneid, were to maintain their old religious tenets, and to support the new form of government in the family of the Cæsars. That poem therefore may very well be considered as a religious and political work, or rather (as the vulgar religion with them was scarce any thing more than an engine of state) it may fairly enough be considered as a work merely political. If this was the case, Virgil was not so highly encouraged by Augustus and Mæcenas for nothing. To speak a little more plainly: he wrote in the service of the new usurpation on the state; and all that can be offered in vindication of him, in this light, is, that the usurper he wrote for, was grown a tame one; and that the temper and bent of their constitution, at that time, was such, that the reins of government must have fallen into the hands of some one person or another; and might probably, on any new revolution, have fallen into the hands of some one less mild and indulgent than Augustus was, at the time when Virgil wrote this poem in his service. But whatever may be said of his reasons for writing it, the poem itself has been highly applauded in all ages, from its first appearance to this day; and though left unfinished by its author, has been always reckoned as much superior to all the other epic poems among the Romans, as Homer's is among the Greeks.

Spence.

§ 35. *Observations on the* ÆNEID, *and the Author's Genius.*

It preserves more to us of the religion of the Romans, than all the other Latin poets (excepting only Ovid) put together; and gives us the forms and appearances of their deities, as strongly as if we had so many pictures of them preserved to us, done by some of the best hands in the Augustan age. It is remarkable that he is commended by some of the ancients themselves, for the strength of his imagination as to this particular, though in general that is not his character, so much as exactness. He was certainly the most correct poet even of his time; in which all false thoughts and idle ornaments in writing were discouraged; and it is as certain, that there is but little of invention in his Æneid;

much less, I believe, than is generally imagined. Almost all the little facts in it are built on history; and even as to the particular lines, no one perhaps ever borrowed more from the poets that preceded him, than he did. He goes so far back as to old Ennius; and often inserts whole verses from him, and some other of their earliest writers. The obsoleteness of their style, did not hinder him much in this: for he was a particular lover of their old language; and no doubt inserted many more antiquated words in his poem, than we can discover at present. Judgment is his distinguishing character; and his great excellence consisted in choosing and ranging things aright. Whatever he borrowed he had the skill of making his own, by weaving it so well into his work, that it looks all of a piece; even those parts of his poems, where this may be most practised, resembling a fine piece of Mosaic, in which all the parts, though of such different marbles, unite together; and the various shades and colours are so artfully disposed as to melt off insensibly into one another.

One of the greatest beauties in Virgil's private character was, his modesty and good-nature. He was apt to think humbly of himself, and handsomely of others; and was ready to show his love of merit, even where it might seem to clash with his own. He was the first who recommended Horace to Mæcenas. *Spence.*

§ 36. *Of* HORACE.

Horace was the fittest man in the world for a court where wit was so particularly encouraged. No man seems to have had more, and all of the genteelest sort; or to have been better acquainted with mankind. His gaiety, and even his debauchery, made him still the more agreeable to Mæcenas: so that it is no wonder that his acquaintance with that minister grew up to so high a degree of friendship, as is very uncommon between a first minister and a poet; and which had possibly such an effect on the latter, as one shall scarce ever hear of between any two friends, the most on a level: for there is some room to conjecture, that he hastened himself out of this world to accompany his great friend in the next. Horace has been most generally celebrated for his lyric poems; in which he far excelled all the Roman poets, and perhaps was no unworthy rival of several of the Greek: which seems to have been the height of his ambition. His next point of merit, as it has been usually reckoned, was his refining satire; and bringing it from the coarseness and harshness of Lucilius to that genteel, easy manner, which he, and perhaps nobody but he and one person more in all the ages since, has ever possessed. I do not remember that any one of the ancients says any thing of his epistles; and this has made me sometimes imagine, that his epistles and satires might originally have passed under one and the same name; perhaps that of Sermones. They are generally written in a style approaching to that of conversation; and are so much alike, that several of the satires might just as well be called epistles, as several of his epistles have the spirit of satire in them. This latter part of his works, by whatever name you please to call them (whether satires and epistles, or discourses in verse on moral and familiar subjects) is what, I must own, I love much better even than the lyric part of his works. It is in these that he shows that talent for criticism, in which he so very much excelled; especially in his long epistle to Augustus; and that other to the Pisos, commonly called his Art of Poetry. They abound in strokes which show his great knowledge of mankind, and in that pleasing way he had of teaching philosophy, of laughing away vice, and insinuating virtue into the minds of his readers. They may serve, as much as almost any writings can, to make men wiser and better: for he has the most agreeable way of preaching that ever was. He was, in general, an honest, good man himself; at least he does not seem to have had any one ill-natured vice about him. Other poets we admire; but there is not any of the ancient poets that I could wish to have been acquainted with, so much as Horace. One cannot be very conversant with his writings, without having a friendship for the man; and longing to have just such another as he was for one's friend.

Spence.

§ 37. *Of* TIBULLUS, PROPERTIUS, *and* OVID.

In that happy age, and in the same court, flourished Tibullus. He enjoyed the acquaintance of Horace, who mentions him in a kind and friendly manner, both in his Odes and in his Epistles. Tibullus is evidently the most exact and most beautiful writer of love verses among the Romans, and was esteemed so by their best judges; though there were some, it seems, even in their better ages of writing and judging, who preferred Porpertius to him. Tibullus's talent seems to have been only for elegiac verse: at least his compliment on Messala (which is his only poem out of it) shows, I think, too plainly that he was neither designed for heroic verse, nor panegyric. Elegance is as much his distinguishing character, among the elegiac writers of this age, as it is Terence's, among the comic writers of the former; and if his subject will never let him be sublime, his judgment at least always keeps him from being faulty.—His rival and cotemporary, Propertius, seems to have set himself too many different models, to copy either of them so well as he might otherwise have done. In one place, he calls himself the Roman Callimachus; in another, he talks of rivalling Philetas; and he is said to have studied Mimnermus, and some other of the Greek lyric writers, with the same view. You may see by this, and the practice of all their poets in general, that it was the constant method of the Romans (whenever they endeavoured to excel) to set some great Greek pattern or other before them. Propertius, perhaps, might have succeeded better, had he fixed on any one of these; and not endeavoured to improve by all of them indifferently.—Ovid makes up the triumvirate of the elegiac writers of this age; and is more loose and incorrect than either of the other. As Propertius followed too many masters, Ovid endeavoured to shine in too many different kinds of writing at the same time. Besides he had a redundant genius; and almost always chose rather to indulge, than to give any restraint to it. If one was to give any opinion of the different merits of his several works, one should not perhaps be much beside the truth in saying, that he excels most in his Fasti; then perhaps in his love-verses; next in his heroic epistles; and lastly, in his Metamorphoses. As for the verses he wrote after his misfortunes, he has quite lost his spirit in them; and though you may discover some difference in his manner, after his banishment came to sit a little lighter on him, his genius never shines out fairly after that fatal stroke. His very love of being witty had forsaken him; though before it seems to have grown upon him, when it was least becoming, towards his old age: for his Metamorphoses (which was the last poem he wrote at Rome, and which indeed was not quite finished when he was sent into banishment) has more instances of false wit in it, than perhaps all his former writings put together. One of the things I have heard him most cried up for, in that piece, is his transitions from one story to another. The ancients thought differently of this point; and Quinctilian, where he is speaking of them, endeavours rather to excuse than to commend him on that head. We have a considerable loss in the latter half of his Fasti; and in his Medea, which is much commended. Dramatic poetry seems not to have flourished, in proportion to the other sorts of poetry, in the Augustan age. We scarce hear any thing of the comic poets of that time; and if tragedy had been much cultivated then, the Roman writers would certainly produce some names from it, to oppose to the Greeks, without going so far back as to those of Actius and Pacuvius. Indeed their own critics, in speaking of the dramatic writings of this age, boast rather of single pieces than of authors: and the two particular tragedies, which they talk of in the highest strain, are the Medea of Ovid, and Varius's Thyestes. However, if it was not the age for plays, it was certainly the age in which almost all the other kinds of poetry were in their greatest excellence at Rome. *Spence.*

§ 38. *Of* PHÆDRUS.

Under this period of the best writing, I should be inclined to insert Phædrus. For though he published after the good manner of writing was in general on the decline, he flourished and formed his style under Augustus: and his book, though it did not appear till the reign of Tiberius, deserves, on all accounts, to be reckoned among the works of the Augustan age. Fabulæ Æsopeæ, was probably the title which he gave his fables. He professedly follows Æsop in them; and declares, that he keeps to his manner, even where the subject is of his own invention. By this it appears, that Æsop's way of telling stories was very short and plain; for the distinguishing beauty of Phædrus's fables is, their conciseness and simplicity. The taste was so much fallen at the time when he published them, that both these were objected to him as faults. He used those critics as they deserved. He tells a long, tedious story to those who objected against the conciseness of his style; and answers some others who condemned the plainness of it, with a run of bombast verses, that have a great many noisy elevated words in them, without any sense at the bottom. *Ibid.*

§ 39. *Of* MANILIUS.

Manilius can scarce be allowed a place in this list of the Augustan poets; his poetry is inferior to a great many of the Latin poets, who have wrote in these lower ages, so long since Latin has ceased to be a living language. There is at least, I believe, no instance, in any one poet of the flourishing ages, of such language, or such versification, as we meet with in Manilius; and there is not any one ancient writer that speaks one word of any such poet about those times. I doubt not, there were bad poets enough in the Augustan age; but I question whether Manilius may deserve the honour of being reckoned even among the bad poets of that time. What must be said, then, to the many passages in the poem which relate to the times in which the author lived, and which all have a regard to the Augustan age? If the whole be not a modern forgery, I do not see how one can deny his being of that age: and if it be a modern forgery, it is very lucky that it should agree so exactly, in so many little particulars, with the ancient globe of the heavens, in the Farnese palace. Allowing Manilius's poem to pass for what it pretends to be, there is nothing remains to us of the poetical works of this Augustan age, besides what I have mentioned: except the garden poem of Columella; the little hunting piece of Gratius; and, perhaps, an elegy or two of Gallus. *Spence.*

§ 40. *Of the Fall of Poetry among the Romans.*

There are some who assert that the great age of the Roman eloquence I have been speaking of began to decline a little even in the latter part of Augustus's reign. It certainly fell very much under Tiberius; and grew every day weaker and weaker, till it was wholly changed under Caligula. Hence therefore we may date the third age, or the fall of the Roman poetry. Augustus, whatever his natural temper was, put on at least a mildness that gave a calm to the state during his time: the succeeding emperors flung off the mask; and not only were, but openly appeared to be, rather monsters than men. We need not go to their historians for proofs of their prodigious vileness: it is enough to mention the bare names of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero. Under such heads, every thing that was good ran to ruin. All discipline in war, all domestic virtues, the very love of liberty, and all the taste for sound eloquence and good poetry, sunk gradually; and faded away, as they had flourished, together. Instead of the sensible, chaste, and manly way of writing, that had been in use in the former age, there now rose up a desire of writing smartly, and an affectation of shining in every thing they said. A certain prettiness, and glitter, and luxuriance of ornaments, was what distinguished their most applauded writers in prose; and their poetry was quite lost in high flights and obscurity. Seneca, the favourite prose writer of those times; and Petronius Arbiter, so great a favourite with many of our own; afford too many proofs of this. As to the prose in Nero's time; and as to the poets, it is enough to say, that they had then Lucan and Persius, instead of Virgil and Horace. *Ibid.*

§ 41. *Of* LUCAN.

Persius and Lucan, who were the most celebrated poets under the reign of Nero, may very well serve for examples of the faults I have just mentioned, one of the swelling, and the other of the obscure style, then in fashion. Lucan's manner in general runs too much into fustian and bombast. His muse was a kind of dropsy, and looks like the soldier described in his own Pharsalia, who in passing the desert sands of Africa, was bit by a serpent, and swelled to such an immoderate size, "that he was lost (as he expresses it) in the tumours of his own body." Some critics have been in too great haste to make Quinctilian say some good things of Lucan, which he never meant to do. What this poet has been always for, and what he will ever deserve to be admired for, are the several philosophical passages that abound in his works; and his generous sentiments, particularly on the love of liberty, and the contempt of death. In his calm hours he is very wise; but he is often in his rants, and never more so than when he is got into a battle, or a storm at sea: but it is remarkable, that even on those occasions, it is not so much a violence of rage, as a madness of affectation, that appears most strongly in him. To give a few instances of it, out of many; in the very beginning of Lucan's storm, when Cæsar ventured to cross the sea in so small a vessel; "the fixed stars themselves seem to be put in motion." Then "the waves rise over the mountains, and carry away the tops of them." Their next step is to heaven; where they catch the rain "in the clouds:" I suppose, to increase their force. The sea opens in several places, and leaves its bottom dry land. All the foundations of the universe are shaken; and nature is afraid of a second chaos. His little skiff, in the mean time, sometimes cuts along the clouds with her sails; and sometimes seems in danger of being stranded on the sands at the bottom of the sea; and must inevitably have been lost, had not the storm (by good fortune) been so strong from every quarter, that she did not know on which side to bulge first.

When the two armies are going to join battle in the plains of Pharsalia, we are told, that all the soldiers were incapable of any fear for themselves, because they were wholly taken up with their concern for the danger which threatened Pompey and the commonwealth. On this great occasion, the hills about them, according to his account, seem to be more afraid than the men; for some of the mountains looked as if they would thrust their heads into the clouds; and others, as if they wanted to hide themselves under the valleys at their feet. And these disturbances in nature were universal: for that day, every single Roman, in whatever part of the world he was, felt a strange gloom spread all over his mind, on a sudden; and was ready to cry, though he did not know why or wherefore.

Such strange things as these make me always wonder the more, how Lucan can be so wise as he is in some parts of his poem. Indeed his sentences are more solid than one could otherwise expect from so young a writer, had he wanted such an uncle as Seneca, and such a master as Cornutus. The swellings in the other parts of his poem may be partly accounted for, perhaps, from his being born in Spain, and in that part of it which was the farthest removed from Greece and Rome; nay, of that very city, which is marked by Cicero as particularly over-run with a bad taste. After all, what I most dislike him for, is a blot in his moral character. He was at first pretty high in the favour of Nero. On the discovery of his being concerned in a plot against him, this philosopher (who had written so much, and so gallantly, about the pleasure of dying) behaved himself in the most despicable manner. He named his own mother as guilty of the conspiracy, in hopes of saving himself. After this, he added several of his friends to his former confession; and thus continued labouring for a pardon, by making sacrifices to the tyrant of such lives, as any one, much less of a philosopher than he seems to have been, ought to think dearer than their own. All this baseness was of no use to him; for, in the end, Nero ordered him to execution too. His veins were opened: and the last words he spoke, were some verses of his own. *Spence.*

§ 42. *Of* PERSIUS.

Persius is said to have been Lucan's school-fellow under Cornutus; and, like him, was bred up more a philosopher than a poet. He has the character of a good man; but scarce deserves that of a good writer, in any other than the moral sense of the word: for his writings are very virtuous, but not very poetical. His great fault is obscurity. Several have endeavoured to excuse or palliate this fault in him, from the danger of the times he lived in; and the necessity a satirist then lay under, of writing so, for his own security. This may hold as to some passages in him; but to say the truth, he seems to have a tendency and love to obscurity in himself: for it is not only to be found where he may speak of the emperor or the state; but in the general course of his satires. So that, in my conscience, I must give him up for an obscure writer; as I should Lucan for a tumid and swelling one.

Such was the Roman poetry under Nero. The three emperors after him were made in a hurry, and had short tumultuous reigns. Then the Flavian family came in. Vespasian, the first emperor of that line, endeavoured to recover something of the good taste that had formerly flourished in Rome; his son Titus, the delight of mankind, in his short reign, encouraged poetry by his example, as well as by his liberalities; and even Domitian loved to be thought a patron of the muses. After him, there was a succession of good emperors, from Nerva to the Antonines. And this extraordinary good fortune (for indeed, if one considers the general run of the Roman emperors, it would have been such, to have had any two good ones only together) gave a new spirit to the arts, that had long been in so languishing a condition, and made poetry revive, and raise up its head again, once more among them. Not that there were very good poets even now: but they were better, at least, than they had been under the reign of Nero. *Spence.*

§ 43. *Of* SILIUS, STATIUS, *and* VALERIUS FLACCUS.

This period produced three epic poets, whose works remain to us; Silius, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus. Silius, as if he had been frightened at the high flight of Lucan, keeps almost always on the ground, and scarce once attempts to soar throughout his whole work. It is plain, however, though it is low; and if he has but little of the spirit of poetry, he is free at least from the affectation, and obscurity, and bombast, which prevailed so much among his immediate predecessors. Silius was honoured with the consulate; and lived to see his son in the same high office. He was a great lover and collector of pictures and statues; some of which he worshipped; especially one he had of Virgil. He used to offer sacrifices too at his tomb near Naples. It is a pity that he could not get more of his spirit in his writings: for he had scarce enough to make his offerings acceptable to the genius of that great poet.—Statius had more of spirit, with a less share of prudence: for his Thebaid is certainly ill-conducted, and scarcely well written. By the little we have of his Achilleid, that would probably have been a much better poem, at least as to the writing part, had he lived to finish it. As it is, his description of Achilles's behaviour at the feast which Lycomedes makes for the Grecian ambassadors, and some other parts of it, read more pleasingly to me than any part of the Thebaid. I cannot help thinking, that the passage quoted so often from Juvenal, as an encomium on Statius, was meant as a satire on him. Martial seems to strike at him too, under the borrowed name of Sabellus. As he did not finish his Achilleid, he may deserve more reputation perhaps as a miscellaneous than as an epic writer; for though the odes and other copies of verses in his Sylvæ are not without their faults, they are not so faulty as his Thebaid. The chief faults of Statius, in his Sylvæ and Thebaid, are said to have proceeded from very different causes: the former, from their having been written incorrectly and in a great deal of haste; and the other, from its being over corrected and hard. Perhaps his greatest fault of all, or rather the greatest sign of his bad judgment, is his admiring Lucan so extravagantly as he does.

It is remarkable, that poetry run more lineally in Statius's family, than perhaps in any other. He received it from his father; who had been an eminent poet in his time, and lived to see his son obtain the laurel-crown at the Alban games; as he had formerly done himself.—Valerius Flaccus wrote a little before Statius. He died young, and left his poem unfinished. We have but seven books of his Argonautics, and part of the eighth, in which the Argonauts are left on the sea, in their return homewards. Several of the modern critics, who have been some way or other concerned in publishing Flaccus's works, make no scruple of placing him next to Virgil, of all the Roman epic poets: and I own I am a good deal inclined to be seriously of their opinion; for he seems to me to have more fire than Silius, and to be more correct than Statius; and as for Lucan, I cannot help looking upon him as quite out of the question. He imitates Virgil's language much better than Silius, or even Statius; and his plan, or rather his story, is certainly less embarrassed and confused than the Thebaid. Some of the ancients themselves speak of Flaccus with a great deal of respect; and particularly Quinctilian; who says nothing at all of Silius or Statius; unless the latter is to be included in that general expression of "several others," whom he leaves to be celebrated by posterity.

As to the dramatic writers of this time, we have not any one comedy, and only ten tragedies, all published under the name of Lucius Annæus Seneca. They are probably the work of different hands; and might be a collection of favourite plays, put together by some bad grammarian; for either the Roman tragedies of this age were very indifferent, or these are not their best. They have been attributed to authors as far distant as the reigns of Augustus and Trajan. It is true, the person who is so positive that one of them in particular must be of the Augustan age, says this of a piece that he seems resolved to cry up at all rates; and I believe one should do no injury to any one of them, in supposing them all to have been written in this third age, under the decline of the Roman poetry.

Of all the other poets under this period, there are none whose works remain to us, except Martial and Juvenal. The former flourished under Domitian; and the latter under Nerva, Trajan, and Adrian.

Spence.

§ 44. *Of* MARTIAL.

Martial is a dealer only in a little kind of writing; for Epigram is certainly (what it is called by Dryden) the lowest step of poetry. He is at the very bottom of the hill; but he diverts himself there, in gathering flowers and playing with insects, prettily enough. If Martial made a new-year's gift, he was sure to send a distich with it: if a friend died, he made a few verses to put on his tomb-stone: if a statue was set up, they came to him for an inscription. These were the common offices of his muse. If he struck a fault in life, he marked it down in a few lines; and if he had a mind to please a friend, or to get the favour of the great, his style was turned to panegyric; and these were his highest employments. He was, however, a good writer in his way; and there are instances even of his writing with some dignity on higher occasions.

Ibid.

§ 45. *Of* JUVENAL.

Juvenal began to write after all I have mentioned; and, I do not know by what good fortune, writes with a greater spirit of poetry than any of them. He has scarce any thing of the gentility of Horace: yet he is not without humour, and exceeds all the satirists in severity. To say the truth, he flashes too much like an angry executioner; but the depravity of the times, and the vices then in fashion, may often excuse some degree of rage in him. It is said he did not write till he was elderly; and after he had been too much used to declaiming. However, his satires have a great deal of spirit in them; and show a strong hatred of vice, with some very fine and high sentiments of virtue. They are indeed so animated, that I do not know any poem of this age, which one can read with near so much pleasure as his satires.

Juvenal may very well be called the last of the Roman poets. After his time, poetry continued decaying more and more, quite down to the time of Constantine; when all the arts were so far lost and extinguished among the Romans, that from that time they themselves may very well be called by the name they used to give to all the world, except the Greeks; for the Romans then had scarce any thing to distinguish them from the Barbarians.

There are, therefore, but three ages of the Roman poetry, that can carry any weight with them in an inquiry of this nature. The first age, from the first Punic war to the time of Augustus, is more remarkable for strength, than any great degree of beauty in writing. The second age, or the Augustan, is the time when they wrote with a due mixture of beauty and strength. And the third, from the beginning of Nero's reign to the end of Adrian's, when they endeavoured after beauty more than strength: when they lost much of their vigour, and run too much into affectation. Their poetry, in its youth, was strong and nervous: in its middle age, it was manly and polite; in its latter days, it grew tawdry and feeble; and endeavoured to hide the decays of its former beauty and strength, in false ornaments of dress, and a borrowed flush on the the face; which did not so much render it pleasing, as it showed that its natural complexion was faded and lost.

Spence.

§ 46. *Of the Introduction, Improvement, and Fall of the Arts at Rome.*

The city of Rome, as well as its inhabitants, was in the beginning rude and unadorned. Those old rough soldiers looked on the effects of the politer arts as things fit only for an effeminate people; as too apt to soften and unnerve men; and to take from that martial temper and ferocity, which they encouraged so much and so universally in the infancy of their state. Their houses were (what the name they gave them signified) only a covering for them, and a defence against bad weather. These sheds of theirs were more like the caves of wild beasts, than the habitations of men; and were rather flung together as chance led them, than formed into regular streets and openings: their walls were half mud, and their roofs pieces of wood stuck together; nay, even this was an after-improvement; for in Romulus's time, their houses were only covered with straw. If they had any thing that was finer than ordinary, that was chiefly taken up in setting off the temples of their gods; and when these began to be furnished with statues (for they had none till long after Numa's time) they were probably more fit to give terror than delight; and seemed rather formed so as to be horrible enough to strike an awe into those who worshipped them, than handsome enough to invite any one to look upon them for pleasure. Their design, I suppose, was answerable to the materials they were made of; and if their gods were of earthen ware, they were reckoned better than ordinary; for many of them were chopped out of wood. One of the chief ornaments in those times, both of the temples and private houses, consisted in their ancient trophies: which were trunks of trees cleared of their branches, and so formed into a rough kind of posts. These were loaded with the arms they had taken in war, and you may easily conceive what sort of ornaments these posts must make, when half decayed by time, and hung about with old rusty arms, besmeared with the blood of their enemies. Rome was not then that beautiful Rome, whose very ruins at this day are sought after with so much pleasure: it was a town, which carried an air of terror in its appearance; and which made people shudder whenever they first entered within its gates.

Spence.

§ 47. *The Condition of the* ROMANS *in the second* PUNIC *War.*

Such was the state of this imperial city, when its citizens had made so great a progress in arms as to have conquered the better part of Italy, and to be able to engage in a war with the Carthaginians; the strongest power then by land, and the absolute masters by sea. The Romans, in the first Punic war, added Sicily to their dominions. In the second, they greatly increased their strength, both by sea and land; and acquired a taste of the arts and elegancies of life, with which till then they had been totally unacquainted. For though before this they were masters of Sicily (which in the old Roman geography made a part of Greece) and of several cities in the eastern parts of Italy, which were inhabited by colonies from Greece, and were adorned with the pictures, and statues and other works, in which that nation delighted, and excelled the rest of the world so much; they had hitherto looked upon them with so careless an eye, that they had felt little or nothing of their beauty. This insensibility they preserved so long, either from the grossness of their minds, or perhaps from their superstition, and a dread of reverencing foreign deities as much as their own; or (which is the most likely of all) out of mere politics, and the desire of keeping up their martial spirit and natural roughness, which they thought the arts and elegancies of the Grecians would be but too apt to destroy. However that was, they generally preserved themselves from even the least suspicion of taste for the polite arts, pretty far into the second Punic war; as appears by the behaviour of Fabius Maximus in that war, even after the scales were turned on their side. When that general took Tarentum, he found it full of riches, and extremely adorned with pictures and statues. Among others, there were some very fine colossal figures of the gods, represented as fighting against the rebel giants. These were made by some of the most eminent masters in Greece; and the Jupiter not improbably, by Lysippus. When Fabius was disposing of the spoil, he ordered the money and plate to be sent to the treasury at Rome, but the statues and pictures to be left behind. The secretary who attended him in his survey, was somewhat struck with the largeness and noble air of the figures just mentioned; and asked, Whether they too must be left with the rest? "Yes," replied Fabius, "leave their angry gods to the Tarentines; we will have nothing to do with them."

Ibid.

§ 48. MARCELLUS *attacks* SYRACUSE, *and sends all his Pictures and Statues to* ROME.

Marcellus had indeed behaved himself very differently in Sicily, a year or two before this happened. As he was to carry on the war in that province, he bent the whole force of it against Syracuse. There was at that time no one city which belonged to the Greeks, more elegant, or better adorned than the city of Syracuse; it abounded in the works of the best masters. Marcellus, when he took the city, cleared it entirely, and sent all their statues and pictures to Rome. When I say all, I use the language of the people of Syracuse; who soon after laid a complaint against Marcellus before the Roman senate, in which they charged him with stripping all their houses and temples, and leaving nothing but bare walls throughout the city. Marcellus himself did not at all disown it, but fairly confessed what he had done: and used to declare, that he had done so, in order to adorn Rome, and to introduce a taste for the fine arts among his countrymen.

Such a difference of behaviour in their two greatest leaders, soon occasioned two different parties in Rome. The old people in general joined in crying up Fabius.—Fabius was not rapacious, as some others were; but temperate in his conquests. In what he had done, he had acted, not only with that moderation which becomes a Roman general, but with much prudence and foresight. "These fineries," they cried, "are a pretty diversion for an idle effeminate people: let us leave them to the Greeks. The Romans desire no other ornaments of life, than a simplicity of manners at home, and fortitude against our enemies abroad. It is by these arts that we have raised our name so high, and spread our dominions so far: and shall we suffer them now to be exchanged for a fine taste, and what they call elegance of living? No, great Jupiter, who presidest over the capitol! let the Greeks keep their arts to themselves, and let the Romans learn only how to conquer and to govern mankind."—Another set, and particularly the younger people, who were extremely delighted with the noble works of the Grecian artists that had been set up for some time in the temples and porticos, and all the most public places of the city, and who used frequently to spend the greatest part of the day in contemplating the beauties of them, extolled Marcellus as much for the pleasure he had given them. "We shall now," said they, "no longer be reckoned among the Barbarians. That rust, which we have been so long contracting, will soon be worn off. Other generals have conquered our enemies, but Marcellus has conquered our ignorance. We begin to see with new eyes, and have a new world of beauties opening before us. Let the Romans be polite, as well as victorious; and let us learn to excel the nations in taste, as well as to conquer them with our arms."

Whichever side was in the right, the party for Marcellus was the successful one; for, from this point of time we may date the introduction of the arts into Rome. The Romans by this means began to be fond of them; and the love of the arts is a passion which grows very fast in any breast, wherever it is once entertained.

We may see how fast and how greatly it prevailed at Rome, by a speech which old Cato the censor made in the senate, not above seventeen years after the taking of Syracuse. He complains in it that their people began to run into Greece and Asia; and to be infected with a desire of playing with their fine things:

that as to such spoils, there was less honour in taking them, than there was danger of their being taken by them: that the gods brought from Syracuse, had revenged the cause of its citizens, in spreading this taste among the Romans: that he heard but too many daily crying up the ornaments of Corinth and Athens; and ridiculing the poor old Roman gods; who had hitherto been propitious to them; and who, he hoped, would still continue so, if they would but let their statues remain in peace upon their pedestals. *Spence.*

§ 49. *The* ROMAN *Generals, in their several Conquests, convey great Numbers of Pictures and Statues to* ROME.

It was in vain too that Cato spoke against it; for the love of the arts prevailed every day more and more; and from henceforward the Roman generals, in their several conquests, seem to have strove who should bring away the greatest number of statues and pictures, to set off their triumphs, and to adorn the city of Rome. It is surprising what accessions of this kind were made in the compass of a little more than half a century after Marcellus had set the example. The elder Scipio Africanus brought in a great number of wrought vases from Spain and Africa, toward the end of the second Punic war; and the very year after that was finished, the Romans entered into a war with Greece, the great school of all the arts, and the chief repository of most of the finest works that ever were produced by them. It would be endless to mention all their acquisitions from hence; I shall only put you in mind of some of the most considerable. Flaminius made a great show both of statues and vases in his triumph over Philip king of Macedon; but he was much exceeded by Æmilius, who reduced that kingdom into a province. Æmilius's triumph lasted three days; the first of which was wholly taken up in bringing in the fine statues he had selected in his expedition; as the chief ornament of the second consisted of vases and sculptured vessels of all sorts, by the most eminent hands. These were all the most chosen things, culled from the collection of that successor of Alexander the Great; for as to the inferior spoils of no less than seventy Grecian cities, Æmilius had left them all to his soldiery, as not worthy to appear among the ornaments of his triumph. Not many years after this, the young Scipio Africanus (the person who is most celebrated for his polite taste of all the Romans hitherto, and who was scarce exceeded by any one of them in all the succeeding ages) destroyed Carthage, and transferred many of the chief ornaments of that city, which had so long bid fair for being the seat of empire, to Rome, which soon became undoubtedly so. This must have been a vast accession; though that great man, who was as just in his actions as he was elegant in his taste, did not bring all the finest of his spoils to Rome, but left a great part of them in Sicily, from whence they had formerly been taken by the Carthaginians. The very same year that Scipio freed Rome from its most dangerous rival, Carthage, Mummius (who was as remarkable for his rusticity, as Scipio was for elegance and taste) added Achaia to the Roman state; and sacked, among several others, the famous city of Corinth, which had been long looked upon as one of the principal reservoirs of the finest works of art. He cleared it of all its beauties, without knowing any thing of them: even without knowing that an old Grecian statue was better than a new Roman one. He used, however, the surest method of not being mistaken; for he took all indifferently as they came in his way; and brought them off in such quantities, that he alone is said to have filled Rome with statues and pictures. Thus, partly from the taste, and partly from the vanity of their generals, in less than seventy years' time (reckoning from Marcellus's taking of Syracuse to the year in which Carthage was destroyed) Italy was furnished with the noblest productions of the ancient artists, that before lay scattered all over Spain, Africa, Sicily, and the rest of Greece. Sylla, beside many others, added vastly to them afterwards; particularly by his taking of Athens, and by his conquests in Asia; where, by his too great indulgence to his armies, he made taste and rapine a general thing, even among the common soldiers, as it had been for a long time, among their leaders.

In this manner the first considerable acquisitions were made by their conquering armies; and they were carried on by the persons sent out to govern their provinces, when conquered. As the behaviour of these in their governments, in general, was one of the greatest blots on the Roman nation, we must not expect a full account of their transactions in the old historians, who treat particularly of the Roman affairs: for such of these that remain to us, are either Romans themselves, or else Greeks who were too much attached to the Roman interest, to speak out the whole truth in this affair. But what we cannot have fully from their own historians, may be pretty will supplied from other hands. A poet of their own, who seems to have been a very honest man, has set the rapaciousness of their governors in general in a very strong light; as Cicero has set forth that of Verres in particular, as strongly. If we may judge of their general behaviour by that of this governor of Sicily, they were more like monsters and harpies, than men. For that public robber (as Cicero calls him, more than once) hunted over every corner of his island, with a couple of finders (one a Greek painter, and the other a statuary of the same nation) to get together his collection; and was so curious and so rapacious in that search, that Cicero says, there was not a gem, or statue, or relievo, or picture, in all Sicily which he did not see; nor any one he liked, which he did not take away from its owner. What he thus got he sent into Italy. Rome was the centre both of their spoils in war, and of their rapines in peace: and if many of their prætors and proconsuls acted but in half so abandoned a manner as this Verres appears to have done, it is very probable that Rome was more enriched in all these sort of things secretly by their governors, than it had been openly by their generals.

Spence.

§ 50. *The Methods made use of in drawing the Works of the best ancient Artists into* ITALY.

There was another method of augmenting these treasures at Rome, not so infamous as this, and not so glorious as the former. What I mean, was the custom of the Ædiles, when they exhibited their public games, of adorning the theatres and other places where they were performed, with great numbers of statues and pictures: which they bought up or borrowed for that purpose, all over Greece, and sometimes even from Asia. Scaurus, in particular, in his ædileship, had no less than three thousand statues and relievos for the mere ornamenting of the stage in a theatre built only for four or five days. This was the same Scaurus who (whilst he was in the same office too) brought to Rome all the pictures of Sicyon, which had been so long one of the most eminent schools in Greece for painting; in lieu of debts owing, or pretended to be owed, from that city to the Roman people.

From these public methods of drawing the works of the best ancient artists into Italy, it grew at length to be a part of private luxury, affected by almost every body that could afford it, to adorn their houses, their porticos, and their gardens, with the best statues and pictures they could procure out of Greece or Asia. None went earlier into this taste, than the family of the Luculli, and particularly Lucius Lucullus, who carried on the war against Mithridates. He was remarkable for his love of the arts and polite learning even from a child; and in the latter part of his life gave himself up so much to collections of this kind, that Plutarch reckons it among his follies. "As I am speaking of his faults (says that historian in his life) I should not omit his vast baths, and piazzas for walking; or his gardens, which were much more magnificent than any in his time at Rome, and equal to any in the luxurious ages that followed; nor his excessive fondness for statues and pictures, which he got from all parts, to adorn his walks and gardens, at an immense expense; and with the vast riches he had heaped together in the Mithridatic war." There were several other families which fell about that time into the same sort of excess; and among the rest, the Julian. The first emperor, who was of that family, was a great collector; and, in particular, was as fond of old gems, as his successor, Augustus, was of Corinthian vases.

This may be called the first age of the flourishing of the politer arts at Rome; or rather the age in which they were introduced there: for the people in this period were chiefly taken up in getting fine things, and bringing them together. There were perhaps some particular persons in it of a very good taste: but in general one may say, there was rather a love, than any great knowledge of their beauties, during this age, among the Romans. They were brought to Rome in the first part of it, in greater numbers than can be easily conceived; and in some time every body began to look upon them with pleasure. The collection was continually augmenting afterwards, from the several methods I have mentioned; and I doubt not but a good taste would have been a general thing among them much earlier than it was, had it not been for the frequent convulsions in their state, and the perpetual struggles of some great man or other to get the reins of government into his hands. These continued quite from Sylla's time to the establishment of the state under Augustus. The peaceful times that then succeeded, and the encouragement which was given by that emperor to all the arts, afforded the Romans full leisure to contemplate the fine works that were got together at Rome in the age before, and to perfect their taste in all the elegancies of life. The artists, who were then much invited to Rome, worked in a style greatly superior to what they had done even in Julius Cæsar's time: so that it is under Augustus that we may begin the second and most perfect age of sculpture and painting, as well as of poetry. Augustus changed the whole appearance of Rome itself; he found it ill built, and left it a city of marble. He adorned it with buildings extremely finer than any it could boast before his time, and set off all those buildings, and even the common streets, with an addition of some of the finest statues in the world.

Spence.

§ 51. *On the Decline of the Arts, Eloquence, and Poetry, upon the Death of Augustus.*

On the death of Augustus, though the arts, and the taste for them, did not suffer so great a change, as appeared immediately in the taste of eloquence and poetry, yet they must have suffered a good deal. There is a secret union, a certain kind of sympathy between all the polite arts, which makes them languish and flourish together. The same circumstances are either kind or unfriendly to all of them. The favour of Augustus, and the tranquillity of his reign, was as a gentle dew from heaven, in a favourable season, that made them bud forth and flourish: and the sour reign of Tiberius was as a sudden frost that checked their growth, and at last killed all their beauties. The vanity, and tyranny, and disturbances of the times that followed, gave the finishing stroke to sculpture as well as eloquence, and to painting as well as poetry. The Greek artists at Rome were not so soon or so much infected by the bad taste of the court, as the Roman writers were; but it reached them too, though by slower and more imperceptible degrees. Indeed what else could be expected from such a run of monsters as Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero? For these were the emperors under whose reigns the arts began to languish; and they suffered so much from their baleful influence, that the Roman writers soon after them speak of all the arts as being brought to a very low ebb. They talk of their being extremely fallen in general; and as to painting, in particular, they represent it as in a most feeble and dying condition. The series of so many good emperors, which happened after Domitian, gave some spirit again to the arts; but soon after the Antonines, they all declined apace, and, by the time of the thirty tyrants, were quite fallen, so as never to rise again under any future Roman emperor.

You may see by these two accounts I have given you of the Roman poetry, and of the other arts, that the great periods of their rise, their flourishing, and their decline, agree very well; and, as it were, tally with one another. Their style was prepared, and a vast collection of fine works laid in, under the first period, or in the times of the republic: in the second, or the Augustan age, their writers and artists were both in their highest perfection; and in the third, from Tiberius to the Antonines, they both began to languish; and then revived a little; and at last sunk totally together.

In comparing the descriptions of their poets with the works of art, I should therefore choose to admit all the Roman poets after the Antonines. Among them all, there is perhaps no one whose omission need be regretted, except that of Claudian; and even as to him it may be considered, that he wrote when the true knowledge of the arts was no more; and when the true taste of poetry was strangely corrupted and lost; even if we were to judge of it by his own writings only, which are extremely better than any of the poets long before, and long after him. It is therefore much better to confine one's self to the three great ages, than to run so far out of one's way for a single poet or two; whose authorities, after all, must be very disputable, and indeed scarce of any weight. *Spence.*

§ 52. *On* DEMOSTHENES.

I shall not spend any time upon the circumstances of Demosthenes's life; they are well known. The strong ambition which he discovered to excel in the art of speaking; the unsuccessfulness of his first attempts; his unwearied perseverance in surmounting all the disadvantages that arose from his person and address; his shutting himself up in a cave that he might study with less distraction, his declaiming by the sea-shore, that he might accustom himself to the noise of a tumultuous assembly, and with pebbles in his mouth that he might correct a defect in his speech; his practising at home with a naked sword hanging over his shoulder, that he might check an ungraceful motion, to which he was subject; all those circumstances, which we learn from Plutarch, are very encouraging to such as study Eloquence, as they show how far art and application may avail, for acquiring an excellence which nature seemed unwilling to grant us. *Blair.*

§ 53. DEMOSTHENES *imitated the manly eloquence of* PERICLES.

Despising the affected and florid manner which the rhetoricians of that age followed, Demosthenes returned to the forcible and manly eloquence of Pericles; and strength and vehemence form the principal characteristics of his Style. Never had orator a finer field than Demosthenes in his Olynthiacs and Philippics, which are his capital orations; and, no doubt, to the nobleness of the subject, and to that integrity and public spirit which eminently breathe in them, they are indebted for much of their merit. The subject is, to rouse the indignation of his countrymen against Philip of Macedon, the public enemy of the liberties of Greece; and to guard them against the insidious measures by which that crafty prince endeavoured to lay them asleep to danger. In the prosecution of this end, we see him taking every proper method to animate a people, renowned for justice, humanity, and valour, but in many instances become corrupt and degenerate. He boldly taxes them with their venality, their indolence and indifference to the public cause; while at the same time, with all the art of an orator, he recalls the glory of their ancestors to their thoughts, shows them that they are still a flourishing and a powerful people, the natural protectors of the liberty of Greece, and who wanted only the inclination to exert themselves, in order to make Philip tremble. With his cotemporary orators, who were in Philip's interest, and who persuaded the people to peace, he keeps no measures, but plainly reproaches them as the betrayers of their country. He not only prompts to vigorous conduct, but he lays down the plan of that conduct; he enters into particulars; and points out, with great exactness,the measures of execution. This is the strain of these orations. They are strongly animated; and full of the impetuosity and fire of public spirit. They proceed in a continued train of inductions, consequences, and demonstrations, founded on sound reason. The figures which he uses are never sought after; but always rise from the subject. He employs them sparingly indeed; for splendour and ornament are not the distinctions of this orator's composition. It is an energy of thought, peculiar to himself, which forms his character, and sets him above all others. He appears to attend much more to things than to words. We forget the orator, and think of the business. He warms the mind, and impels to action. He has no parade and ostentation; no methods of insinuation; no laboured introductions; but is like a man full of his subject, who, after preparing his audience, by a sentence or two for hearing plain truths, enters directly on business. *Ibid.*

§ 54. DEMOSTHENES *contrasted with* ÆSCHINES.

Demosthenes appears to great advantage, when contrasted with Æschines, in the celebrated oration "pro Corona." Æschines was his rival in business, and personal enemy; and one of the most distinguished orators of that age. But when we read the two orations, Æschines is feeble in comparison of Demosthenes, and makes much less impression on the mind. His reasonings concerning the law that was in question, are indeed very subtile; but his invective against Demosthenes is general and ill-supported. Whereas Demosthenes is a torrent, that nothing can resist. He bears down his antagonist with violence; he draws his character in the strongest colours; and the particular merit of that oration is, that all the descriptions in it are highly picturesque. There runs through it a strain of magnanimity and high honour: the orator speaks with that strength and conscious dignity which great actions and public spirit alone inspire. Both orators use great liberties with one another; and, in general, that unrestrained license which ancient manners permitted, even to the length of abusive names and downright scurrility, as appears both here and in Cicero's Philippics, hurts and offends a modern ear. What those ancient orators gained by such a manner in point of freedom and boldness, is more than compensated by want of dignity; which seems to give an advantage, in this respect, to the greater decency of modern speaking. *Blair.*

§ 55. *On the Style of* DEMOSTHENES.

The Style of Demosthenes is strong and concise, though sometimes, it must not be dissembled, harsh and abrupt. His words are very expressive; his arrangement is firm and manly; and, though far from being unmusical, yet it seems difficult to find in him that studied, but concealed number, and rhythmus, which some of the ancient critics are fond of attributing to him. Negligent of those lesser graces, one would rather conceive him to have aimed at that sublime which lies in sentiment. His actions and pronunciation are recorded to have been uncommonly vehement and ardent; which, from the manner of his composition, we are naturally led to believe. The character which one forms of him, from reading his works, is of the austere, rather than the gentle kind. He is, on every occasion, grave, serious, passionate; takes every thing on a high tone; never lets himself down, or attempts any thing like pleasantry. If any fault can be found in his admirable eloquence, it is, that he sometimes borders on the hard and dry. He may be thought to want smoothness and grace; which Dionysius of Halicarnassus attributes to his imitating too closely the manner of Thucydides, who was his great model for Style, and whose history he is said to have written eight times over with his own hand. But these defects are far more than compensated, by that admirable and masterly force of masculine eloquence, which, as it overpowered all who heard it, cannot, at this day, be read without emotion.

After the days of Demosthenes, Greece lost her liberty, eloquence of course languished, and relapsed again into the feeble manner introduced by the Rhetoricians and Sophists. Demetrius Phalerius, who lived in the next age to Demosthenes, attained indeed some character, but he is represented to us as a flowery, rather than a persuasive speaker, who aimed at grace rather than substance. "Delectabat Athenienses," says Cicero, "magis quam inflammabat." "He amused the Athenians, rather than warmed them." And after this time, we hear of no more Grecian orators of any note. *Ibid.*

§ 56. *On* CICERO.

The object in this period most worthy to draw our attention, is Cicero himself; whose name alone suggests every thing that is splendid in oratory. With the history of his life and with his character, as a man and a politician, we have not at present any direct concern. We consider him only as an eloquent speaker; and, in this view, it is our business to remark both his virtues, and his defects, if he has any. His virtues are, beyond controversy, eminently great. In all his orations there is high art. He begins, generally, with a regular exordium; and with much preparation and insinuation prepossesses the hearers, and studies to gain their affections. His method is clear, and his arguments are arranged with great propriety. His method is indeed more clear than that of Demosthenes; and this is one advantage which he has over him. We find every thing in its proper place; he never attempts to move till he has endeavoured to convince: and in moving, especially the softer passions, he is very successful. No man, that ever wrote, knew the power and force of words better than Cicero. He rolls them along with the greatest beauty and pomp; and in the structure of his sentences, is curious and exact to the highest degree. He is always full and flowing, never abrupt. He is a great amplifier of every subject; magnificent, and in his sentiments highly moral. His manner is on the whole diffuse, yet it is often happily varied, and suited to the subject. In his four orations, for instance, against Catiline, the tone and style of each of them, particularly the first and last, is very different, and accommodated with a great deal of judgment to the occasion, and the situation in which they were spoken. When a great public object roused his mind, and demanded indignation and force, he departs considerably from that loose and declamatory manner to which he inclines at other times, and becomes exceedingly cogent and vehement. This is the case in his orations against Anthony, and in those too against Verres and Catiline.

Blair.

§ 57. *Defects of* CICERO.

Together with those high qualities which Cicero possesses, he is not exempt from certain defects, of which it is necessary to take notice. For the Ciceronian Eloquence is a pattern so dazzling by its beauties, that, if not examined with accuracy and judgment, it is apt to betray the unwary into a faulty imitation; and I am of opinion, that it has sometimes produced this effect. In most of his orations, especially those composed in the earlier part of his life, there is too much art; even carried the length of ostentation. There is too visible a parade of eloquence. He seems often to aim at obtaining admiration, rather than at operating conviction, by what he says. Hence, on some occasions, he is showy, rather than solid; and diffuse, where he ought to have been pressing. His sentences are at all times round and sonorous; they cannot be accused of monotony, for they possess variety of cadence; but, from too great a study of magnificence, he is sometimes deficient in strength. On all occasions, where there is the least room for it, he is full of himself. His great actions, and the real services which he had performed to his country, apologize for this in part; ancient manners, too, imposed fewer restraints from the side of decorum; but, even after these allowances are made, Cicero's ostentation of himself cannot be wholly palliated; and his orations, indeed all his works, leave on our minds the impression of a good man, but, withal, of a vain man.

Ibid.

§ 58. *Comparison of* Cicero *and* Demosthenes.

On the subject of comparing Cicero and Demosthenes, much has been said by critical writers. The different manners of these two princes of eloquence, and the distinguishing characters of each, are so strongly marked in their writings, that the comparison is, in many respects, obvious and easy. The character of Demosthenes is vigour and austerity; that of Cicero is gentleness and insinuation. In the one, you find more manliness; in the other, more ornament. The one is more harsh, but more spirited and cogent; the other more agreeable, but, withal, looser and weaker.

To account for this difference, without any prejudice to Cicero, it has been said, that we must look to the nature of their different auditories; that the refined Athenians followed with ease the concise and convincing eloquence of Demosthenes; but that a manner more popular, more flowery, and declamatory, was requisite in speaking to the Romans, a people less acute, and less acquainted with the arts of speech. But this is not satisfactory. For we must observe, that the Greek orator spoke much oftener before a mixed multitude, than the Roman. Almost all the public business of Athens was transacted in popular assemblies. The common people were his hearers and his judges. Whereas Cicero generally addressed himself to the "Patres Conscripti," or, in criminal trials, to the Prætor, and the Select Judges; and it cannot be imagined, that the persons of highest rank and best education in Rome, required a more diffuse manner of pleading than the common citizens of Athens, in order to make them understand the cause, or relish the speaker. Perhaps we shall come nearer the truth by observing, that to unite together all the qualities, without the least exception, that form a perfect orator, and to excel equally in each of those qualities, is not to be expected from the limited powers of human genius. The highest degree of strength is, I suspect, never found united with the highest degree of smoothness and ornament: equal attentions to both are incompatible; and the genius that carries ornament to its utmost length, is not of such a kind, as can excel as much in vigour. For there plainly lies the characteristical difference between these two celebrated orators.

It is a disadvantage to Demosthenes, that, besides his conciseness, which sometimes produces obscurity, the language, in which he writes, is less familiar to most of us than the Latin, and that we are less acquainted with the Greek antiquities than we are with the Roman. We read Cicero with more ease, and of course with more pleasure. Independent of this circumstance too, he is no doubt, in himself, a more agreeable writer than the other. But notwithstanding this advantage, I am of opinion, that were the state in danger, or some great public interest at stake, which drew the serious attention of men, an oration in the spirit and strain of Demosthenes would have more weight, and produce greater effects, than one in the Ciceronian manner. Were Demosthenes's Philippics spoken in a British assembly, in a similar conjuncture of affairs, they would convince and persuade at this day. The rapid style, the vehement reasoning, the disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, which perpetually animate them, would render their success infallible over any modern assembly. I question whether the same can be said of Cicero's orations; whose eloquence, however beautiful, and however well suited to the Roman taste, yet borders oftener on declamation, and is more remote from the manner in which we now expect to hear real business and causes of importance treated.*

Blair.

§ 59. *On the Means of improving in* ELOQUENCE.

Next to moral qualifications, what, in the second place, is most necessary to an orator, is a fund of knowledge. Much is this inculcated by Cicero and Quinctilian: "Quod omnibus disciplinis et artibus debet esse instructus Orator." By which they mean, that he ought to have what we call a Liberal Education; and to be formed by a regular study of philosophy, and the polite arts. We must never forget that,

Scribendi rectè, sapere est et principium et fons.

Good sense and knowledge are the foundation of all good speaking. There is no art that can teach one to be eloquent, in any sphere, without a sufficient acquaintance with what belongs to that sphere; or if there were an art that made such pretensions, it would be mere quackery, like the pretensions of the sophists of old, to teach their disciples to speak for and against every subject; and would be deservedly exploded by all wise men. Attention to style, to composition, and all the arts of speech, can only assist an orator in setting off, to advantage, the stock of materials which he possesses; but the stock, the materials themselves, must be brought from other quarters than from rhetoric. He who is to plead at the bar, must make himself thoroughly master of the knowledge of the law; of all the learning and experience that can be useful in his profession, for supporting a cause, or convincing a judge. He who is to speak from the pulpit, must apply himself closely to the study of divinity, of practical religion, of morals, of human nature; that he may be rich in all the topics both of instruction and of persuasion. He who would fit himself for being a member of the supreme council of the nation, or of any public assembly, must be thoroughly acquainted with the business that belongs to such assembly; he must study the forms of court, the course of procedure; and must attend minutely to all the facts that may be the subject of question or deliberation.

Besides the knowledge that properly belongs to that profession to which he addicts himself, a public speaker, if ever he expects to be eminent, must make himself acquainted, as far as his necessary occupations allow, with the general circle of polite literature. The study of poetry may be useful to him on many occasions, for embellishing his style, for suggesting lively images, or agreeable allusions. The study of history may be still more useful to him; as the knowledge of facts, of eminent characters, and of the course of human affairs, finds place on many occasions. There are few great occasions of public speaking, in which one will not derive assistance from cultivated taste, and extensive knowledge. They will often yield him materials for proper ornament; sometimes, for argument and real use. A deficiency of knowledge, even in subjects that belong not directly to his own profession, will expose him to many disadvantages, and give better qualified rivals a great superiority over him.

Ibid.

§ 60. *A Habit of Industry recommended to the intended Speaker.*

Allow me to recommend, in the third place, not only the attainment of useful knowledge, but a habit of application and industry. Without this, it is impossible to excel in any thing. We must not imagine that it is by a sort of mushroom growth, that one can rise to be a distinguished pleader, or preacher, or speaker in any assembly. It is not by starts of application, or by a few years' preparation of study afterwards discontinued, that eminence can be attained. No; it can be attained only by means of regular industry, grown up into a habit, and ready to be exerted on every occasion that calls for industry. This is the fixed law of our nature; and he must have a very high opinion of his own genius indeed, that can believe himself an exception to it. A very wise law of our nature it is; for industry is, in truth, the great "Condimentum," the seasoning of every pleasure; without which life is doomed to languish. Nothing is so great an enemy both to honourable attainments, and to the real, to the brisk, and spirited enjoyment of life, as that relaxed state of mind which raises from indolence and dissipation. One that is destined to excel in any art, especially in the arts of speaking and writing, will be known by this more than by any other mark whatever, an enthusiasm for that art; an enthusiasm, which, firing his mind with the object he has in view, will dispose him to relish every labour which the means require. It was this that characterized the great men of antiquity; it is this, which must distinguish the moderns who would tread their steps. This honourable enthusiasm, it is highly necessary for such as are studying oratory to cultivate. If youth wants it, manhood will flag miserably. *Blair.*

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* In this judgment I concur with Mr. David Hume in his Essay upon Eloquence. He gives it as his opinion, that, of all human productions, the Orations of Demosthenes present to us the models which approach the nearest to perfection.

§ 61. *Attention to the best Models recommended to the Student in Eloquence.*

Attention to the best models will contribute greatly towards improvement. Every one who speaks or writes should, indeed, endeavour to have somewhat that is his own, that is peculiar to himself, and that characterizes his composition and style. Slavish imitation depresses genius, or rather betrays the want of it. But withal, there is no genius so original, but may be profited and assisted by the aid of proper examples, in style, composition, and delivery. They always open some new ideas; they serve to enlarge and correct our own. They quicken the current of thought, and excite emulation. *Ibid.*

§ 62. *Caution necessary in choosing Models.*

Much, indeed, will depend upon the right choice of models which we purpose to imitate; and supposing them rightly chosen, a farther care is requisite, of not being seduced by a blind universal admiration. For, "decipit examplar, vitiis imitabile." Even in the most finished models we can select, it must not be forgotten, that there are always some things improper for imitation. We should study to acquire a just conception of the peculiar characteristic beauties of any writer, or public speaker, and imitate these only. One ought never to attach himself too closely to any single model; for he who does so, is almost sure of being seduced into a faulty and affected imitation. His business should be, to draw from several the proper ideas of perfection. *Ibid.*

§ 63. *On the Style of* Bolingbroke *and* Swift.

Some authors there are, whose manner of writing approaches nearer to the style of speaking than others; and who, therefore, can be imitated with more safety. In this class, among the English authors, are Dean Swift and Lord Bolingbroke. The

Dean, throughout all his writings, in the midst of much correctness, maintains the easy natural manner of an unaffected speaker; and this is one of his chief excellencies. Lord Bolingbroke's style is more splendid, and more declamatory than Dean Swift's; but still it is the style of one who speaks, or rather who harangues. Indeed, all his political writings (for it is to them only, and not to his philosophical ones, that this observation can be applied) carry much more the appearance of one declaiming with warmth in a great assembly, than of one writing in a closet, in order to be read by others. They have all the copiousness, the fervour, the inculcating method, that is allowable and graceful in an orator; perhaps too much of it for a writer: and it is to be regretted, as I have formerly observed, that the matter contained in them should have been so trivial or so false; for, from the manner and style, considerable advantage might be reaped.

Blair.

§ 64. *Frequent exercise in composing and speaking, necessary for Improvement in Eloquence.*

Besides attention to the best models, frequent exercise, both in composing and speaking, will be admitted to be a necessary mean of improvement. That sort of composition is, doubtless, most useful, which relates to the profession, or kind of public speaking, to which persons addict themselves. This they should keep ever in their eye, and be gradually inuring themselves to it. But let me also advise them not to allow themselves in negligent composition of any kind. He who has it for his aim to write, or to speak correctly, should, in the most trivial kind of composition, in writing a letter, nay, even in common discourse, study to acquit himself with propriety. I do not at all mean, that he is never to write or to speak a word, but in elaborate and artificial language. This would form him to a stiffness and affectation, worse, by ten thousand degrees, than the greatest negligence. But it is to be observed, that there is, in every thing, a manner which is becoming, and has propriety; and opposite to it, there is a clumsy and faulty performance of the same thing. The becoming manner is very often the most light, and seemingly careless manner; but it requires taste and attention to seize the just idea of it. That idea, when acquired, we should keep in our eye, and form upon it whatever we write or say.

Ibid.

§ 65. *On the Necessity of a Classical Education.*

The fairest diamonds are rough till they are polished, and the purest gold must be run and washed, and sifted in the ore. We are untaught by nature; and the finest qualities will grow mild and degenerate, if the mind is not formed by discipline, and cultivated with an early care. In some persons who have run up to men without a liberal education, we may observe many great qualities darkened and eclipsed; their minds are crusted over like diamonds in the rock, they flash out sometimes into an irregular greatness of thought, and betray in their actions an unguided force, and unmanaged virtue; something very great and very noble may be discerned, but it looks cumbersome and awkward, and is alone of all things the worse for being natural. Nature is undoubtedly the best mistress and aptest scholar; but nature herself must be civilized, or she will look savage, as she appears in the Indian princes, who are vested with a native majesty, a surprising greatness and generosity of soul, and discover what we always regret, fine parts, and excellent natural endowments, without improvement. In those countries which we call barbarous, where art and politeness are not understood, nature hath the greater advantage in this, that simplicity of manners often secures the innocence of the mind; and as virtue is not, so neither is vice, civilized and refined: but in these politer parts of the world, where virtue excels by rules and discipline, vice also is more instructed, and with us good qualities will not spring up alone: many hurtful weeds will rise with them, and choke them in their growth, unless removed by some skilful hand: nor will the mind be brought to a just perfection without cherishing every hopeful seed, and repressing every superfluous humour: the mind is like the body in this regard, which cannot fall into a decent and easy carriage, unless it be fashioned in time: an untaught behaviour is like the people that use it, truly rustic, forced, and uncouch, and art must be applied to make it natural. *Felton.*

§ 66. *On the Entrance to Knowledge.*

Knowledge will not be won without pains and application: some parts of it are easier, some more difficult of access: we must proceed at once by sap and battery; and when the breach is practicable, you have nothing to do, but to press boldly on and enter: it is troublesome and deep digging for pure waters, but when once you come to the spring, they rise and meet you: the entrance into knowledge is oftentimes very narrow, dark, and tiresome, but the rooms are spacious, and gloriously furnished; the country is admirable, and every prospect entertaining. You need not wonder, that fine countries have strait avenues, when the regions of happiness, like those of knowledge, are impervious and shut to lazy travellers; and the way to heaven itself is narrow.

Common things are easily attained, and no body values what lies in every body's way: what is excellent is placed out of ordinary reach, and you will easily be persuaded to put forth your hand to the utmost stretch, and reach whatever you aspire at. *Ibid.*

§ 67. *Classics recommended.*

Many are the subjects which will invite and deserve the steadiest application from those who would excel, and be distinguished in them. Human learning in general; natural philosophy, mathematics, and the whole circle of science. But there is no necessity of leading you through these several fields of knowledge: it will be most commendable for you to gather some of the fairest fruit from them all, and to lay up a store of good sense, and sound reason, of great probity, and solid virtue. This is the true use of knowledge, to make it subservient to the great duties of our most holy religion, that as you are daily grounded in the true and saving knowledge of a Christian, you may use the helps of human learning, and direct them to their proper end. You will meet with great and wonderful examples of an irregular and mistaken virtue in the Greeks and Romans, with many instances of greatness of mind, of unshaken fidelity, contempt of human grandeur, a most passionate love of their country, prodigality of life, disdain of servitude, inviolable truth, and the most public disinterested souls, that ever threw off all regards in comparison with their country's good: you will discern the flaws and blemishes of their fairest actions, see the wrong apprehensions they had of virtue, and be able to point them right, and keep them within their proper bounds. Under this correction you may extract a generous and noble spirit from the writings and histories of the ancients. And I would in a particular manner recommend the classic authors to your favour, and they will recommend themselves to your approbation.

If you would resolve to master the Greek as well as the Latin tongue, you will find that the one is the source and original of all that is most excellent in the other: I do not mean so much for expression as thought, though some of the most beautiful strokes of the Latin tongue are drawn from the lines of the Grecian orators and poets; but for thought and fancy, for the very foundation and embellishment of their works, you will see, the Latins have ransacked the Grecian store, and as Horace advises all who would succeed in writing well, had their authors night and morning in their hands.

And they have been such happy imitators, that the copies have proved more exact than the originals; and Rome has triumphed over Athens, as well in wit as arms; for though Greece may have the honour of invention, yet it is easier to strike out a new course of thought than to equal old originals; and therefore it is more honour to surpass, than to invent anew. Verrio is a great man from his own designs; but if he had attempted upon the Cartons, and outdone Raphael Urbin in life and colours, he had been acknowledged greater than that celebrated master, but now we must think him less.

Felton.

§ 68. *A Comparison of the Greek and Roman Writers.*

If I may detain you with a short comparison of the Greek and Roman authors, I must own the last have the preference in my thoughts; and I am not singular in my opinion. It must be confessed, the Romans have left no tragedies behind them, that may compare with the majesty of the Grecian stage; the best comedies of Rome were written on the Grecian plan, but Menander is too far lost to be compared with Terence; only if we may judge by the method Terence used in forming two Greek plays into one, we shall naturally conclude, since his are perfect upon that model, that they are more perfect than Menander's were. I shall make no great difficulty in preferring Plautus to Aristophanes, for wit and humour, variety of characters, plot and contrivance in his plays, though Horace has censured him for low wit.

Virgil has been so often compared with Homer, and the merits of those poets so often canvassed, that I shall only say, that if the Roman shines not in the Grecian's flame and fire, it is the coolness of his judgment, rather than the want of heat. You will generally find the force of a poet's genius, and the strength of his fancy, display themselves in the descriptions they give of battles, storms, prodigies, &c.; and Homer's fire breaks out on these occasions in more dread and terror; but Virgil mixes compassion with his terror, and, by throwing water on the flame, makes it burn the brighter; so in the storm; so in his battles on the fall of Pallas and Camilla; and that scene of horror, which his hero opens in the second book; the burning of Troy; the ghost of Hector; the murder of the king; the massacre of the people; the sudden surprise, and the dead of night, are so relieved by the piety and pity that is every where intermixed, that we forget our fears, and join in the lamentation. All the world acknowledges the Æneid to be most perfect in its kind; and considering the disadvantage of the language, and the severity of the Roman muse, the poem is still more wonderful, since, without the liberty of the Grecian poets, the diction is so great and noble, so clear, so forcible and expressive, so chaste and pure, that even all the strength and compass of the Greek tongue, joined to Homer's fire, cannot give us stronger and clearer ideas, than the great Virgil has set before our eyes; some few instances excepted, in which Homer, through the force of genius, has excelled.

I have argued hitherto for Virgil; and it will be no wonder that his poem should be more correct in the rules of writing, if that strange opinion prevails, that Homer wrote without any view or design at all; that his poems are loose, independent pieces tacked together, and were originally only so many songs or ballads upon the gods and heroes, and the siege of Troy. If this be true, they are the completest string of ballads I ever met with, and whoever collected them, and put them in the methods we now read them in, whether it were Pisistratus, or any other, has placed them in such order, that the Iliad and the Odysseis seem to have been composed with one view and design, one scheme and intention, which are carried on from the beginning to the end, all along uniform and consistent with themselves. Some have argued, the world was made by a wise Being, and not jumbled together by chance, from the very absurdity of such a supposition; and they have illustrated their argument from the impossibility that such a poem as Homer's and Virgil's should rise in such beautiful order out of millions of letters eternally shaken together: but this argument is half spoiled, if we allow, that the poems of Homer, in each of which appears one continued formed design from one end to the other, were written in loose scraps on no settled premeditated scheme. Horace, we are sure, was of another opinion, and so was Virgil too, who built his Æneid upon the model of the Iliad and the Odysseis. After all, Tully, whose relation of this passage has given some colour to this suggestion, says no more, than that Pisistratus (whom he commends for his learning, and condemns for his tyranny) observing the books of Homer to lie confused and out of order, placed them in the method the great author, no doubt, had first formed them in; but all this Tully gives us only as report. And it would be very strange, that Aristotle should form his rules on Homer's poems; that Horace should follow his example, and propose Homer for the standard of epic writing, with this bright testimony, that he "never undertook any thing inconsiderately, nor ever made any foolish attempts;" if indeed this celebrated poet did not intend to form his poems in the order and design we see them in. If we look upon the fabric and construction of those great works, we shall find an admirable proportion in all the parts, a perpetual coincidence, and dependence of one upon another; I will venture an appeal to any learned critic in this cause; and if it be a sufficient reason to alter the common readings in a letter, a word, or a phrase, from the consideration of the context, or propriety of the language, and call it the restoring of the text, is it not a demonstration that these poems were made in the same course of lines, and upon the same plan we read them in at present, from all the arguments that connexion, dependence, and regularity can give us? If those critics, who maintain this odd fancy of Homer's writing, had found them loose and undigested, and restored them to the order they stand in now, I believe they would have gloried in their art, and maintained it with more uncontested reasons, than they are able to bring for the discovery of a word or a syllable hitherto falsely printed in the text of any author. But, if any learned men of singular fancies and opinions will not allow these buildings to have been originally designed after the present model, let them at least allow us one poetical supposition on our side, That Homer's harp was as powerful to command his scattered incoherent pieces into the beautiful structure of a poem, as Amphion's was to summon the stones into a wall, or Orpheus's to lead the trees a dance. For certainly, however it happens, the parts are so justly disposed, that you cannot change any book into the place of another, without spoiling the proportion, and confounding the order of the whole.

The Georgics are above all controversy with Hesiod; but the Idilliums of Theocritus have something so inimitably sweet in the verse and thoughts, such a native simplicity, and are so genuine, so natural a result of the rural life, that I must, in my poor judgment, allow him the honour of the pastoral.

In Lyrics the Grecians may seem to have excelled, as undoubtedly they are superior in the number of their poets, and variety of their verse. Orpheus, Alcæus, Sappho, Simonides, and Stesichorus are almost entirely lost. Here and there a fragment of some of them is remaining, which, like some broken parts of ancient statues, preserve an imperfect monument of the delicacy, strength, and skill of the great master's hand.

Pindar is sublime, but obscure, impetuous in his course, and unfathomable in the depth and loftiness of his thoughts. Anacreon flows soft and easy, every where diffusing the joy and indolence of his mind through his verse, and tuning his harp to the smooth and pleasant temper of his soul. Horace alone may be compared to both; in whom are reconciled the loftiness and majesty of Pindar, and the gay, careless, jovial temper of Anacreon: and, I suppose, however Pindar may be admired for greatness, and Anacreon for delicateness of thought; Horace, who rivals one in his triumphs, and the other in his mirth and love, surpasses them both in justness, elegance, and happiness of expression. Anacreon has another follower among the choicest wits of Rome, and that is Catullus, whom, though his lines be rough, and his numbers inharmonious, I could recommend for the softness and delicacy, but must decline for the looseness of his thoughts, too immodest for chaste ears to bear.

I will go no farther in the poets; only, for the honour of our country, let me observe to you, that while Rome has been contented to produce some single rivals to the Grecian poetry, England hath brought forth the wonderful Cowley's wit, who was beloved by every muse he courted, and has rivalled the Greek and Latin poets in every kind but tragedy.

I will not trouble you with the historians any farther, than to inform you, that the contest lies chiefly between Thucydides and Sallust, Herodotus, and Livy; though I think Thucydides aud Livy may on many accounts more justly be compared: the critics have been very free in their censures, but I shall be glad to suspend any farther judgment, till you shall be able to read them, and give me your opinion.

Oratory and philosophy are the next disputed prizes; and whatever praises may be justly given to Aristotle, Plato, Xenophon, and Demosthenes, I will venture to say, that the divine Tully is all the Grecian orators and philosophers in one.

Felton.

§ 69. *A short Commendation of the Latin Language.*

And now, having possibly, given you some prejudice in favour of the Romans, I must beg leave to assure you, that if you have not leisure to master both, you will find your pains well awarded in the Latin tongue, when once you enter into the elegancies and beauties of it. It is the peculiar felicity of that language to speak good sense in suitable expressions; to give the finest thoughts in the happiest words, and in an easy majesty of style, to write up to the subject. "And in this, lies the great secret of writing well. It is that elegant simplicity, that ornamental plainness of speech, which every common genius thinks so plain, that any body may reach it, and findeth so very elegant, that all his sweat, and pains, and study, fail him in the attempt."

In reading the excellent authors of the Roman tongue, whether you converse with poets, orators, or historians, you will meet with all that is admirable in human composure. And though life and spirit, propriety and force of style, be common to them all, you will see that nevertheless every writer shines in his peculiar excellencies; and that wit, like beauty, is diversified into a thousand graces of feature and complexion.

I need not trouble you with a particular character of these celebrated writers. What I have said already, and what I shall say farther of them as I go along, renders it less necessary at present, and I would not preengage your opinion implicitly to my side. It will be a pleasant exercise of your judgment to distinguish them yourself; and when you and I shall be able to depart from the common received opinions of the critics and commentators, I may take some other occasion of laying them before you, and submitting what I shall then say of them to your approbation. *Felton.*

§ 70. *Directions in reading the Classics.*

In the mean time, I shall only give you two or three cautions and directions for your reading them, which to some people will look a little odd, but with me they are of great moment, and very necessary to be observed.

The first is, that you would never be persuaded into what they call Common-places; which is a way of taking an author to pieces, and ranging him under proper heads, that you may readily find what he has said upon any point, by consulting an alphabet. This practice is of no use but in circumstantials of time and place, custom and antiquity, and in such instances where facts are to be remembered not where the brain is to be exercised. In these cases it is of great use: it helps the memory, and serves to keep those things in a sort of order and succession. But, common-placing the sense of an author is such a stupid undertaking, that, if I may be indulged in saying it, they want common sense that practise it. What heaps of this rubbish have I seen! O the pains and labour to record what other people have said, that is taken by those who have nothing to say themselves! You may depend upon it, the writings of these men are never worth the reading; the fancy is cramped, the invention spoiled, their thoughts on every thing are prevented, if they think at all; but it is the peculiar happiness of these collectors of sense, that they can write without thinking.

I do most readily agree, that all the bright sparkling thoughts of the ancients, their finest expressions, and noblest sentiments, are to be met with in these transcribers; but how wretchedly are they brought in, how miserably put together! Indeed, I can compare such productions to nothing but rich pieces of patch work, sewed together with packthread.

When I see a beautiful building of exact order and proportion taken down, and the different materials laid together by themselves, it puts me in mind of these common-place men. The materials are certainly very good, but they understand not the rules of architecture so well, as to form them into just and masterly proportions any more: and yet how beautiful would they stand in another model upon another plan!

For, we must confess the truth: We can say nothing new, at least we can say nothing better than has been said before; but we may nevertheless make what we say our own. And this is done when we do not trouble ourselves to remember in what page or what book we have read such a passage; but it falls in naturally with the course of our own thoughts, and takes its place in our writings with as much ease, and looks with as good a grace, as it appeared in two thousand years ago.

This is the best way of remembering the ancient authors, when you relish their way of writing, enter into their thoughts, and imbibe their sense. There is no need of tying ourselves up to an imitation of any of them; much less to copy or transcribe them. For there is room for vast variety of thought and style; as nature is various in her works, and is nature still. Good authors, like the celebrated masters in the several schools of painting, are originals in their way, and different in their manner. And when we can make the same use of the Romans as they did of the Grecians, and habituate ourselves to their way of thinking and writing, we may be equal in rank, though different from them all, and be esteemed originals as well as they.

And this is what I would have you do. Mix and incorporate with those ancient streams; and though your own wit will be improved and heightened by such a strong infusion, yet the spirit, the thought, the fancy, the expression, which shall flow from your pen, will be entirely your own.

Felton.

§ 71. *The Reputation of the Ancients established too firmly to be shaken.*

If any one, at this day, in the eighteenth century, takes upon him to decry the ancient Classics; if he pretends to have discovered that Homer and Virgil are poets of inconsiderable merit, and that Demosthenes and Cicero are not great Orators, we may boldly venture to tell such a man, that he has come too late with his discovery. The reputation of such writers is established upon a foundation too solid to be now shaken by any arguments whatever; for it is established upon the almost universal taste of mankind, proved and tried throughout the succession of so many ages. Imperfections in their works he may indeed point out; passages that are faulty he may show; for where is the human work that is perfect? But if he attempts to discredit their works in general, or to prove that the reputation which they have gained is on the whole unjust, there is an argument against him, which is equal to full demonstration. He must be in the wrong; for human nature is against him. In matters of taste, such as poetry and oratory, to whom does the appeal lie? where is the standard? and where the authority of the last decision? where is it to be looked for, but as I formerly showed, in those feelings and sentiments that are found, on the most extensive examination, to be the common sentiments and feelings of men? These have been fully consulted on this head. The Public, the unprejudiced Public, has been tried and appealed to for many centuries, and throughout almost all civilized nations. It has pronounced its verdict; it has given its sanction to these writers; and from this tribunal there lies no farther appeal.

In matters of mere reasoning, the world may be long in an error; and may be convinced of the error by stronger reasonings, when produced. Positions that depend upon science, upon knowledge, and matters of fact, may be overturned according as science and knowledge are enlarged, and new matters of fact are brought to light. For this reason, a system of philosophy receives no sufficient sanction from its antiquity, or long currency. The world, as it grows older, may be justly expected to become, if not wiser, at least more knowing; and supposing it doubtful whether Aristotle, or Newton, were the greater genius, yet Newton's philosophy may prevail over Aristotle's, by means of later discoveries, to which Aristotle was a stranger. But nothing of this kind holds as to matters of Taste; which depend not on the progress of knowledge and science, but upon sentiment and feeling. It is in vain to think of undeceiving mankind, with respect to errors committed here, as in Philosophy. For the universal feeling of mankind is the natural feeling; and because it is the natural, it is, for that reason, the right feeling. The reputation of the Iliad and the Æneid must therefore stand upon sure ground because it has stood so long; though that of the Aristotelian or Platonic philosophy, every one is at liberty to call in question.

Blair.

§ 72. *In what Respects the Moderns excel the Ancients.*

Let us guard, however, against a blind and implicit veneration for the Ancients in every thing. I have opened the general principle, which must go far in instituting a fair comparison between them and the Moderns. Whatever superiority the Ancients may have had in point of genius, yet in all arts, where the natural progress of knowledge has had room to produce any considerable effects, the Moderns cannot but have some advantage. The world may, in certain respects, be considered as a person, who must needs gain somewhat by advancing in years. Its improvements have not, I confess, been always in proportion to the centuries that have passed over it; for during the course of some ages it has sunk as into a total lethargy. Yet when roused from that lethargy, it has generally been able to avail itself, more or less, of former discoveries. At intervals, there arose some happy genius, who could both improve on what had gone before, and invent something new. With the advantage of a proper stock of materials, an inferior genius can make greater progress than a much superior one, to whom these materials are wanting.

Hence, in Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Chemistry, and other sciences that depend on an extensive knowledge and observation of facts, modern philosophers have an unquestionable superiority over the ancient. I am inclined also to think, that in matters of pure reasoning, there is more precision among the moderns, than in some instances there was among the ancients; owing perhaps to a more extensive literary intercourse, which has improved and sharpened the faculties of men. In some studies too, that relate to taste and fine writing, which is our object, the progress of society must, in equity, be admitted to have given us some advantages. For instance, in history; there is certainly more political knowledge in several European nations at present, than there was in ancient Greece and Rome. We are better acquainted with the nature of government, because we have seen it under a greater variety of forms and revolutions. The world is more laid open than it was in former times; commerce is greatly enlarged; more countries are civilized; posts are every where established; intercourse is become more easy; and the knowledge of facts, by consequence, more attainable. All these are great advantages to historians; of which in some measure, as I shall afterwards show, they have availed themselves. In the more complex kinds of poetry, likewise, we may have gained somewhat, perhaps, in point of regularity and accuracy. In dramatic performances, having the advantage of the ancient models, we may be allowed to have made some improvements in the variety of the characters, the conduct of the plot, attentions to probability, and to decorum. *Blair.*

§ 73. *We must look to the Ancients for elegant Composition, and to the Moderns for accurate Philosophy.*

From whatever cause it happens, so it is, that among some of the ancient writers, we must look for the highest models in most of the kinds of elegant composition. For accurate thinking and enlarged ideas, in several parts of philosophy, to the moderns we ought chiefly to have recourse. Of correct and finished writing in some works of taste, they may afford useful patterns; but for all that belongs to original genius, to spirited, masterly, and high execution, our best and most happy ideas are, generally speaking, drawn from the ancients. In epic poetry, for instance, Homer and Virgil, to this day, stand not within many degrees of any rival. Orators, such as Cicero and Demosthenes, we have none. In history, notwithstanding some defects, which I am afterwards to mention in the ancient historical plans, it may be safely asserted, that we have no such historical narration, so elegant, so picturesque, so animated, and interesting as that of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Livy, Tacitus, and Sallust. Although the conduct of the drama may be admitted to have received some improvements, yet for poetry and sentiment, we have nothing to equal Sophocles and Euripides; nor any dialogue in comedy, that comes up to the correct, graceful, and elegant simplicity of Terence. We have no such love-elegies as those of Tibullus: no such pastorals as some of Theocritus's: and for Lyric poetry, Horace stands quite unrivalled. The name of Horace cannot be mentioned without a particular encomium. That "curiosa felicitas" which Petronius has remarked in his expression; the sweetness, elegance, and spirit of many of his odes, the thorough knowledge of the world, the excellent sentiments, and natural easy manner which distinguish his Satires and Epistles, all contribute to render him one of those very few authors whom one never tires of reading; and from whom alone, were every other monument destroyed, we should be led to form a very high idea of the taste and genius of the Augustan age. *Ibid.*

§ 74. *The ancient Historians excel in picturesque Narration.*

In all the virtues of narration, particularly in that of picturesque descriptive narration, several of the ancient historians eminently excel. Hence, the pleasure that is found in reading Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus. They are all conspicuous for the art of narration. Herodotus is, at all times, an agreeable writer, and relates every thing with that *naïveté* and simplicity of manner, which never fails to interest the reader. Though the manner of Thucydides be more dry and harsh, yet, on great occasions, as when he is giving an account of the plague of Athens, the siege of Platæa, the sedition in Corcyra, the defeat of the Athenians in Sicily, he displays a very strong and masterly power of description. Xenophon's Cyropædia, and his Anabasis, or retreat of the ten thousand, are extremely beautiful. The circumstances are finely selected, and the narration is easy and engaging; but his Hellenics, or continuation of the history of Thucydides, is a much inferior work. Sallust's art of historical painting in his Catilinarian, but more especially in his Jugurthine war, is well known; though his style is liable to censure, as too studied and affected. *Blair.*

§ 75. Livy *remarkable for Historical Painting.*

Livy is more unexceptionable in his manner; and is excelled by no historian whatever in the art of narration: several remarkable examples might be given from him. His account, for instance, of the famous defeat of the Roman army by the Samnites, at the Furcæ Caudinæ, in the beginning of the ninth book, affords one of the most beautiful exemplifications of historical painting, that is any where to be met with. We have first, an exact description of the narrow pass between two mountains, into which the enemy had decoyed the Romans. When they find themselves caught, and no hope of escape left, we are made to see first their astonishment, next, their indignation, and then, their dejection, painted in the most lively manner, by such circumstances and actions as were natural to persons in their situation. The restless and unquiet manner in which they pass the night; the consultations of the Samnites; the various measures proposed to be taken; the messages between the two armies, all heighten the scene. At length, in the morning the consuls return to the camp, and inform them that they could receive no other terms but that of surrendering their arms, and passing under the yoke, which was considered as the last mark of ignominy for a conquered army. *Ibid.*

§ 76. Tacitus *remarkable for Historical Painting.*

Tacitus is another author eminent for historical painting, though in a manner altogether different from that of Livy. Livy's descriptions are more full, more plain, and natural; those of Tacitus consist in a few bold strokes. He selects one or two remarkable circumstances, and sets them before us in a strong, and, generally, in a new and uncommon light. Such is the following picture of the situation of Rome, and of the emperor Galba, when Otho was advancing against him: "Agebatur huc illuc Galba vario, turbæ fluctuantis impulsu, completis undique basilicis et templis, lugubri prospectu. Neque populi, aut plebis ulla vox; sed attoniti vultus et conversæ ad omnia aures. Non tumultus, non quies; sed quale magni metus, et magnæ iræ, silentium est."* No image, in any poet, is more strong and expressive than this last stroke of the description; "Non tumultus, non quies, sed quale," &c. This is a conception of the sublime kind, and discovers high genius. Indeed, throughout all his work, Tacitus shows the hand of a master. As he is profound in reflection, so he is striking in description, and pathetic in sentiment. The philosopher, the poet, and the historian, all meet in him. Though the period of which he writes may be reckoned unfortunate for an historian, he has made it afford us many interesting exhibitions of human nature. The relations which he gives of the deaths of several eminent personages, are as affecting as the deepest tragedies. He paints with a glowing pencil; and possesses, beyond all writers, the talent of painting, not to the imagination merely, but to the heart. With many of the most distinguished beauties, he is, at the same time, not a perfect model for history; and such as have formed themselves upon him, have seldom been successful. He is to be admired, rather than imitated. In his reflections he is too refined; in his style too concise, sometimes quaint and affected, often abrupt and obscure. History seems to require a more natural, flowing, and popular manner. *Blair.*

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* "Galba was driven to and fro by the tide of the multitude shoving him from place to place. The temples and public buildings were filled with crowds, of a dismal appearance. No clamours were heard, either from the citizens, or from the rabble. Their countenances were filled with consternation; their ears were employed in listening with anxiety. It was not a tumult; it was not quietness; it was the silence of terror and of wrath."

§ 77. *On the Beauty of Epistolary Writing.*

. Its first and fundamental requisite is, to be natural and simple; for a stiff and laboured manner is as bad in a letter as it is in conversation. This does not banish sprightliness and wit. These are graceful in letters, just as they are in conversation: when they flow easily, and without being studied; when employed so as to season, not to cloy. One who, either in conversation or in letters, affects to shine and to sparkle always, will not please long. The style of letters should not be too highly polished. It ought to be neat and correct, but no more. All nicety about words betrays study; and hence musical periods, and appearances of number and harmony in arrangement, should be carefully avoided in letters. The best letters are commonly such as the authors have written with most facility. What the heart or the imagination dictates, always flows readily; but where there is no subject to warm or interest these, constraint appears; and hence those letters of mere compliment, congratulation, or affected cóndolence, which have cost the authors most labour in composing, and which, for that reason, they perhaps consider as their master-pieces, never fail of being the most disagreeable and insipid to the readers.

Ibid.

§ 78. *Ease in writing Letters must not degenerate to carelessness.*

It ought, at the same time, to be remembered, that the ease and simplicity which I have recommended in epistolary correspondence, are not to be understood as importing entire carelessness. In writing to the most intimate friend, a certain degree of attention, both to the subject and the style, is requisite and becoming. It is no more than what we owe both to ourselves, and to the friend with whom we correspond. A slovenly and negligent manner of writing is a disobliging mark of want of respect. The liberty besides, of writing letters with too careless a hand, is apt to betray persons into imprudence in what they write. The first requisite, both in conversation and correspondence, is to attend to all the proper decorums which our own character, and that of others, demand. An imprudent expression in conversation may be forgotten and pass away; but when we take the pen into our hand, we must remember, that "Litera scripta manet."*

Ibid.

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* What is written is permanent.

§ 79. *On* PLINY'S *Letters.*

Pliny's letters are one of the most celebrated collections which the ancients have given us, in the epistolary way. They are elegant and polite; and exhibit a very pleasing and amiable view of the author. But according to the vulgar phrase, they smell too much of the lamp. They are too elegant and fine; and it is not easy to avoid thinking, that the author is casting an eye towards the Public, when he is appearing to write only for his friends. Nothing indeed is more difficult, than for an author, who publishes his own letters, to divest himself altogether of attention to the opinion of the world in what he says; by which means, he becomes much less agreeable than a man of parts would be, if, without any constraint of this sort, he were writing to his intimate friend.

Blair.

§ 80. *On* CICERO'S *Letters.*

Cicero's Epistles, though not so showy as those of Pliny, are, on several accounts, a far more valuable collection; indeed, the most valuable collection of letters extant in any language. They are letters of real business, written to the greatest men of the age, composed with purity and elegance, but without the least affectation; and what adds greatly to their merit, written without any intention of being published to the world. For it appears that Cicero never kept copies of his own letters; and we are wholly indebted to the care of his freedman Tyro, for the large collection that was made, after his death, of those which are now extant, amounting to near a thousand.* They contain the most authentic materials of the history of that age; and are the last monuments which remain of Rome in its free state; the greatest part of them being written during that important crisis, when the republic was on the point of ruin; the most interesting situation, perhaps, which is to be found in the affairs of mankind. To his intimate friends, especially to Atticus, Cicero lays open himself and his heart, with entire freedom. In the course of his correspondence with others, we are introduced into acquaintance with several of the principal personages of Rome; and it is remarkable that most of Cicero's correspondents, as well as himself, are elegant and polite writers; which serves to heighten our idea of the taste and manners of that age.

Ibid.

§ 81. *On* POPE'S *and* SWIFT'S *Letters.*

The most distinguished collection of letters in the English language, is that of Mr. Pope, Dean Swift, and their friends; partly published in Mr. Pope's works, and partly in those of Dean Swift. This collection is, on the whole, an entertaining and agreeable one; and contains much wit and ingenuity. It is not, however, altogether free of the fault which I imputed to Pliny's Epistles, of too much study and refinement. In the variety of letters from different persons, contained in that collection, we find many that are written with ease, and a beautiful simplicity. Those of Dr. Arbuthnot, in particular, always deserve that praise. Dean Swift's also are unaffected; and as a proof of their being so, they exhibit his character fully, with all its defects; though it were to be wished, for the honour of his memory, that his epistolary correspon-

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*See his Letter to Atticus, which was written a year or two before his death, in which he tells him, in answer to some inquiries concerning his epistles, that he had no collection of them, and that Tyro had only about seventy of them. *Ad Att.* 16. 5.

dence had not been drained to the dregs by so many successive publications, as have been given to the world. Several of Lord Bolingbroke's, and of Bishop Atterbury's letters, are masterly. The censure of writing letters in too artificial a manner, falls heaviest on Mr. Pope himself. There is visibly more study, and less of nature and the heart in his letters, than in those of some of his correspondents. He had formed himself on the manner of Voiture, and is too fond of writing like a wit. His letters to ladies are full of affectation. Even in writing to his friends, how forced an introduction is the following, of a letter to Mr. Addison: "I am more joyed at your return, than I should be at that of the Sun, as much as I wish for him in this melancholy wet season; but it is his fate too, like yours, to be displeasing to owls and obscene animals, who cannot bear his lustre." How stiff a compliment is it, which he pays to Bishop Atterbury:—"Though the noise and daily bustle for the Public be now over, I dare say, you are still tendering its welfare; as the Sun in winter, when seeming to retire from the world, is preparing warmth and benedictions for a better season." This sentence might be tolerated in an harangue; but is very unsuitable to the style of one friend corresponding with another. *Blair.*

§ 82. *Lyric Poetry.* *On* PINDAR.

Pindar, the great father of lyric poetry, has been the occasion of leading his imitators into some defects. His genius was sublime; his expressions are beautiful and happy; his descriptions picturesque. But finding it a very barren subject to sing the praises of those who had gained the prize in the public games, he is perpetually digressive, and fills up his poems with fables of the gods and heroes, that have little connexion either with his subject, or with one another. The ancients admired him greatly; but as many of the histories of particular families and cities, to which he alludes, are now unknown to us, he is so obscure, partly from his subjects, and partly from his rapid, abrupt manner of treating them, that, notwithstanding the beauty of his expression, our pleasure in reading him is much diminished. One would imagine, that many of his modern imitators thought the best way to catch his spirit, was to imitate his disorder and obscurity. In several of the choruses of Euripides and Sophocles, we have the same kind of lyric poetry as in Pindar, carried on with more clearness and connexion, and at the same time with much sublimity. *Ibid.*

§ 83. *On* HORACE, *as a Lyric Poet.*

Of all the writers of odes, ancient or modern, there is none that, in point of correctness, harmony, and happy expression, can vie with Horace. He has descended from the Pindaric rapture to a more moderate degree of elevation; and joins connected thought, and good sense, with the highest beauties of poetry. He does not often aspire beyond that middle region, which I mentioned as belonging to the ode; and those odes, in which he attempts the sublime, are perhaps not always his best.* The peculiar character, in which he excels, is grace and elegance; and in this style of composition, no poet has ever attained to a greater perfection than Horace. No poet supports a moral sentiment with more dignity, touches a gay one more happily, or possesses the art of trifling more agreeably, when he chooses to trifle. His language is so fortunate, that with a single word or epithet, he often conveys a whole description to the fancy. Hence he ever has been, and ever will continue to be a favourite author with all persons of taste.

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* There is no ode whatever of Horace's, without great beauties. But though I may be singular in my opinion, I cannot help thinking that in some of those odes which have been much admired for sublimity, (such as Ode iv. Lib. iv. "Qualem ministrum fulminis alitem, &c.") there appears somewhat of a strained and forced effort to be lofty. The genius of this amiable poet shows itself, according to my judgment, to greater advantage, in themes of a more temperate kind.

Blair.

§ 84. *On the different kinds of Poetical Composition in the Sacred Books; and of the distinguishing characters of the chief writers. 1st. Of the Didactic.*

The several kinds of poetical composition which we find in scripture, are chiefly the didactic, elegiac, pastoral, and lyric. Of the didactic species of poetry, the Book of Proverbs is the principal instance. The nine first chapters of that book are highly poetical, adorned with many distinguished graces, and figures of expression. At the 10th chapter, the style is sensibly altered, and descends into a lower strain, which is continued to the end; retaining however that sententious, pointed manner, and that artful construction of period, which distinguishes all the Hebrew poetry. The Book of Ecclesiastes comes likewise under this head; and some of the Psalms, as the 119th in particular. *Ibid.*

§ 85. *Of the Elegiac and Pastoral Poetry of Scripture.*

Of elegiac poetry, many very beautiful specimens occur in Scripture; such as the lamentation of David over his friend Jonathan; several passages in the prophetical books; and several of David's Psalms, composed on occasions of distress and mourning. The 42d Psalm, in particular, is, in the highest degree, tender and plaintive. But the most regular and perfect elegiac composition in the Scripture, perhaps in the whole world, is the book entitled the Lamentations of Jeremiah. As the prophet mourns in that book over the destruction of the Temple, and the Holy City, and the overthrow of the whole state, he assembles all the affecting images which a subject so melancholy could suggest. The composition is uncommonly artificial. By turns the prophet, and the city of Jerusalem, are introduced, as pouring forth their sorrows; and in the end, a chorus of the people send up the most earnest and plaintive supplications to God. The lines of the original too, as may, in part, appear from our translation, are longer than is usual in the other kinds of Hebrew poetry; and the melody is rendered thereby more flowing, and better adapted to the querimonious strain of elegy.

The Song of Solomon affords us a high exemplification of pastoral poetry. Considered with respect to its spiritual meaning, it is undoubtedly a mystical allegory; in its form, it is a dramatic pastoral, or a perpetual dialogue between personages in the character of shepherds: and, suitably to that form, it is full of rural and pastoral images, from beginning to end. *Ibid.*

§ 86. *On the Lyric Poetry of Scripture.*

Of lyric poetry, or that which is intended to be accompanied with music, the Old Testament is full. Besides a great number of hymns and songs, which we find scattered in the historical and prophetical books, such as the song of Moses, the song of Deborah, and many others of like nature, the whole book of Psalms is to be considered as a collection of sacred odes. In these, we find the ode exhibited in all the varieties of its form, and supported with the highest spirit of lyric poetry; sometimes sprightly, cheerful, and triumphant; sometimes solemn and magnificent; sometimes tender and soft. From these instances, it clearly appears, that there are contained in the holy scriptures full exemplifications of several of the chief kinds of poetical writing.

Blair.

§ 87. *A diversity of style and manner in the different Composers of the Sacred Books. On* JOB, DAVID, *and* ISAIAH.

Among the different composers of the sacred books, there is an evident diversity of style and manner; and to trace their different characters in this view, will contribute not a little towards our reading their writings with greater advantage. The most eminent of the sacred poets are, the author of the Book of Job, David, and Isaiah. As the compositions of David are of the lyric kind, there is a greater variety of style and manner in his works, than in those of the other two. The manner in which, considered merely as a poet, David chiefly excels, is the pleasing, the soft, and the tender. In his Psalms, there are many lofty and sublime passages; but, in strength of description, he yields to Job; in sublimity, he yields to Isaiah. It is a sort of temperate grandeur for which David is chiefly distinguished; and to this he always soon returns, when, upon some occasions, he rises above it. The psalms in which he touches us most, are those in which he describes the happiness of the righteous, or the goodness of God; expresses the tender breathings of a devout mind, or sends up moving and affectionate supplications to heaven. Isaiah is, without exception, the most sublime of all poets. This is abundantly visible in our translation; and, what is a material circumstance, none of the books of scripture appear to have been more happily translated than the writings of this prophet. Majesty is his reigning character; a majesty more commanding, and more uniformly supported, than is to be found among the rest of the Old Testament poets. He possesses, indeed, a dignity and grandeur, both in his conceptions and expressions, which are altogether unparalleled, and peculiar to himself. There is more clearness and order too, and a more visible distribution of parts, in his book, than in any other of the prophetical writings. *Ibid.*

§ 88. *On the Book of* JOB.

It only now remains to speak of the book of Job. It is known to be extremely ancient; generally reputed the most ancient of all the poetical books; the author uncertain. It is remarkable, that this book has no connexion with the affairs or manners of the Jews, or Hebrews. The scene is laid in the land of Uz, or Idumæa, which is a part of Arabia; and the imagery employed is generally of a different kind, from what I before showed to be peculiar to the Hebrew poets. We meet with no allusions to the great events of sacred history, to the religious rites of the Jews, to Lebanon or to Carmel, or any of the peculiarities of the climate of Judæa. We find few comparisons founded on rivers or torrents; these were not familiar objects in Arabia. But the longest comparison that occurs in the book, is to an object frequent and well known in that region, a brook that fails in the season of heat, and disappoints the expectation of the traveller.

The poetry, however, of the book of Job, is not only equal to that of any other of the sacred writings, but is superior to them all, except those of Isaiah alone. As Isaiah is the most sublime, David the most pleasing and tender, so Job is the most descriptive, of all the inspired poets. A peculiar glow of fancy, and strength of description, characterize the author. No writer whatever abounds so much in metaphors. He may be said, not to describe, but to render visible, whatever he treats of. A variety of instances might be given. Let us remark only those strong and lively colours, with which, in the following passages, taken from the 18th and 20th chapters of his book, he paints the condition of the wicked; observe how rapidly his figures rise before us; and what a deep impression, at the same time, they leave on the imagination. "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon the earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach the clouds, yet he shall perish for ever. He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased away, as a vision of the night. The eye also which saw him, shall see him no more; they which have seen him, shall say, where is he?—He shall suck the poison of asps, the viper's tongue shall slay him. In the fulness of his sufficiency, he shall be in straits; every hand shall come upon him. He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through. All darkness shall be hid in his secret places. A fire not blown shall consume him. The heaven shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him. The increase of his house shall depart. His goods shall flow away in the day of wrath. The light of the wicked shall be put out; the light shall be dark in his tabernacle. The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down. For he is cast into a net, by his own feet. He walketh upon a snare. Terrors shall make him afraid on every side; and the robber shall prevail against him. Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation. His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street. He shall be driven from light into darkness. They that come after him shall be astonished at his day. He shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty." *Blair.*

§ 89. *On the Iliad of* HOMER.

The subject of the Iliad must unquestionably be admitted to be, in the main, happily chosen. In the days of Homer, no object could be more splendid and dignified than the Trojan war. So great a confederacy of the Grecian states, under one leader, and the ten years' siege which they carried on against Troy, must have spread far abroad the renown of many military exploits, and interested all Greece in the traditions concerning the heroes who had most eminently signalized themselves.—Upon these traditions, Homer grounded his poem; and though he lived, as is generally believed, only two or three centuries after the Trojan war, yet, through the want of written records, tradition must, by his time, have fallen into the degree of obscurity most proper for poetry; and have left him at full liberty to mix as much fable as he pleased, with the remains of true history. He has not chosen, for his subject, the whole Trojan war; but, with great judgment, he has selected one part of it, the quarrel betwixt Achilles and Agamemnon, and the events to which that quarrel gave rise; which, though they take up forty-seven days only, yet include the most interesting, and most critical period of the war. By this management, he has given greater unity to what would have otherwise been an unconnected history of battles. He has gained one hero, or principal character, Achilles, who reigns throughout the work; and he has shown the pernicious effect of discord among confederated princes. At the same time, I admit that Homer is less fortunate in his subject than Virgil. The plan of the Æneid includes a greater compass and a more agreeable diversity of events; whereas the Iliad is almost entirely filled with battles.

The praise of high invention has in every age been given to Homer, with the greatest reason. The prodigious number of incidents, of speeches, of characters divine and human, with which he abounds; the surprising variety with which he has diversified his battles, in the wounds and deaths, and little history-pieces of almost all the persons slain, discover an invention next to boundless. But the praise of judgment is, in my opinion, no less due to Homer, than that of invention. His story is all along conducted with great art. He rises upon us gradually; his heroes are brought out, one after another, to be objects of our attention. The distress thickens, as the poem advances; and every thing is so contrived as to aggrandize Achilles, and to render him, as the poet intended he should be, the capital figure.

But that wherein Homer excels all writers, is the characteristical part. Here, he is without a rival. His lively and spirited exhibition of characters, is, in a great measure, owing to his being so dramatic a writer, abounding every where with dialogue and conversation. There is much more dialogue in Homer than in Virgil; or, indeed, than in any other poet. *Blair.*

§ 90. *On the Odyssey of* HOMER.

My observations, hitherto, have been made upon the Iliad only. It is necessary to take some notice of the Odyssey also. Longinus's criticism upon it is not without foundation, that Homer may, in this poem, be compared to the setting sun, whose grandeur still remains, without the heat of his meridian beams. It wants the vigour and sublimity of the Iliad; yet, at the same time, possesses so many beauties, as to be justly entitled to high praise. It is a very amusing poem, and has much greater variety than the Iliad; it contains many interesting stories; and beautiful descriptions. We see every where the same descriptive and dramatic genius, and the same fertility of invention, that appears in the other work. It descends indeed from the dignity of gods, and heroes, and warlike achievements; but in recompense, we have more pleasing pictures of ancient manners. Instead of that ferocity which reigns in the Iliad, the Odyssey presents us with the most amiable images of hospitality and humanity; entertains us with many a wonderful adventure, and many a landscape of nature; and instructs us by a constant vein of morality and virtue, which runs through the poem. *Ibid.*

§ 91. *On the Beauties of* VIRGIL.

Virgil possesses beauties which have justly drawn the admiration of ages, and which, to this day, hold the balance in equilibrium between his fame and that of Homer. The principal and distinguishing excellency of Virgil, and which, in my opinion he possesses beyond all poets, is tenderness. Nature had endowed him with exquisite sensibility; he felt every affecting circumstance in the scenes he describes; and, by a single stroke, he knows how to reach the heart. This, in an epic poem, is the merit next to sublimity; and puts it in an author's power to render his composition extremely interesting to all readers.

The chief beauty of this kind, in the Iliad, is the interview of Hector with Andromache. But, in the Æneid, there are many such. The second book is one of the greatest master-pieces that ever was executed by any hand; and Virgil seems to have put forth there the whole strength of his genius, as the subject afforded a variety of scenes, both of the awful and tender kind. The images of horror, presented by a city burned and sacked in the night, are finely mixed with pathetic and affecting incidents. Nothing, in any poet, is more beautifully described than the death of old Priam; and the family-pieces of Æneas, Anchises, and Creusa, are as tender as can be conceived. In many passages of the Æneid, the same pathetic spirit shines; and they have been always the favourite passages in that work. The fourth book, for instance, relating the unhappy passion and death of Dido, has been always most justly admired, and abounds with beauties of the highest kind. The interview of Æneas with Andromache and Helenus, in the third book; the episodes of Pallas and Evander, of Nisus and Euryalus, of Lausus and Mezentius, in the Italian wars, are all striking instances of the poet's power of raising the tender emotions. For we must observe, that though the Æneid be an unequal poem, and, in some places, languid, yet there are beauties scattered through it all; and not a few, even in the last six books. The best and most finished books, upon the whole, are the first, the second, the fourth, the sixth, the seventh, the eighth, and the twelfth. *Blair.*

§ 92. *On the comparative Merit of* HOMER *and* VIRGIL.

Upon the whole, as to the comparative merit of those two great princes of epic poetry, Homer and Virgil; the former must undoubtedly be admitted to be the greater genius; the latter, to be the more correct writer. Homer was an original in his art, and discovers both the beauties and the defects, which are to be expected in an original author, compared with those who succeed him; more boldness, more nature and ease, more sublimity and force; but greater irregularities and negligences in composition. Virgil has, all along, kept his eye upon Homer; in many places he has not so much imitated, as he has literally translated him. The description of the storm, for instance, in the first Æneid, and Æneas's speech upon that occasion, are translations from the fifth book of the Odyssey; not to mention almost all the similes of Virgil, which are no other than copies of those of Homer. The pre-eminence in invention, therefore, must, beyond doubt, be ascribed to Homer. As to the pre-eminence in judgment, though many critics are disposed to give it to Virgil, yet, in my opinion, it hangs doubtful. In Homer, we discern all the Greek vivacity; in Virgil, all the Roman stateliness. Homer's imagination is by much the most rich and copious; Virgil's the most chaste and correct. The strength of the former lies, in his power of warming the fancy; that of the latter, in his power of touching the heart. Homer's style is more simple and animated; Virgil's more elegant and uniform. The first has, on many occasions, a sublimity to which the latter never attains; but the latter, in return, never sinks below a certain degree of epic dignity, which cannot so clearly be pronounced of the former. Not, however, to detract from the admiration due to both these great poets, most of Homer's defects may reasonably be imputed, not to his genius, but to the manners of the age in which he lived; and for the feeble passages of the Æneid, this excuse ought to be admitted, that the Æneid was left an unfinished work. *Blair.*

§ 93. *On the Connexion between Taste and Moral Sentiment.*

If the beauty of the material world were altogether independent of expression; if any original law had imperiously prescribed the objects in which the eye and the ear alone could find delight, the pleasures of taste must have been independent of all moral emotion, and the qualities of beauty and sublimity as distinct from moral sensibility as those of number or of figure. The scenery of nature would have produced only an organic pleasure, which would have expired with the moment in which it was felt; and the compositions of the artist, instead of awakening all the enthusiasm of fancy, and of feeling, must have been limited to excite only the cold approbation of faithful outline, and accurate detail. No secret analogies, no silent expressions, would then have connected enjoyment with improvement; and in contradiction to every other appearance of human nature, an important source of pleasure would have been bestowed, without any relation to the individual or the social advancement of the human race.

In the system which is established, on the contrary; in that system which makes matter sublime or beautiful only as it is significant of mind; we perceive the lofty end which is pursued; and that pleasure is here, as in every other case, made instrumental to the moral purposes of our being. While the objects of the material world are made to attract our infant eyes, there are latent ties by which they reach our hearts; and wherever they afford us delight, they are always the signs or expressions of higher qualities, by which our moral sensibilities are called forth. It may not be our fortune, perhaps, to be born amid its nobler scenes. But wander where we will, trees wave, rivers flow, mountains ascend, clouds darken, or winds animate the face of heaven; and over the whole scenery, the sun sheds the cheerfulness of his morning, the splendour of his noon-day, or the tenderness of his evening light. There is not one of these features of scenery which is not fitted to awaken us to moral emotion; to lead us, when once the key of our imagination is struck, to trains of fascinating and of endless imagery; and in the indulgence of them to make our bosoms either glow with conceptions of mental excellence, or melt in the dreams of moral good. Even upon the man of the most uncultivated taste, the scenes of nature have some inexplicable charm: there is not a chord perhaps of the human heart which may not be awakened by their influence; and I believe there is no man of genuine taste, who has not often felt, in the lone majesty of nature, some unseen spirit to dwell, which in his happier hours, touched, as if with magic hand, all the springs of his moral sensibility, and rekindled in his heart those original conceptions of the moral or intellectual excellence of his nature, which it is the melancholy tendency of the vulgar pursuits of life to diminish, if not altogether to destroy.

In the sublimity or beauty of the works of art, this purpose of nature is yet more evident. If it is from their natural beauty they affect us, from their being expressive of fineness, delicacy, gentleness, majesty, solemnity, &c. they then awaken corresponding emotions in our bosoms, and give exercise to some of the most virtuous feelings of our nature. If it is from their relative beauty, from their being expressive of invention, genius, taste, or fancy in the artist, they produce effects no less important to our intellectual improvement. They raise us to those high conceptions of the powers and of the attainments of the human mind, which is the foundation of every noble ambition. They extend our views of the capacities of our nature for whatever is great or excellent; and whatever be the pursuits from which we come, they stimulate us to higher exertions in them, by the prospect of the genius which has been exhibited, and the excellence which has been attained.

But it is chiefly in the beauty *of the human countenance and form* that the great purpose of nature is most apparent. When we feel these, it is not a mere organic or animal effect we experience. Whatever is lovely or beloved in the character of MIND, whatever in the powers or dispositions of man can awaken admiration or excite sensibility; the loveliness of innocence, the charms of opening genius, the varied tenderness of domestic affection; the dignity of heroic, or the majesty of patriotic virtue; all these are expressed to us in the features of the countenance, or in the positions and movements of the form. While we behold them, we feel not only a feeling of temporary pleasure, but what Lord Kames has profoundly and emphatically called the "sympathetic emotion of virtue;" we share in some measure in those high dispositions, the expressions of which we contemplate; our own bosoms glow with kindred sensibilities; and we return to life and to its duties, with minds either softened to a wider benevolence, or awakened to a higher tone of morality.

It is thus, by means of the expressions of which it is every where significant, that the material universe around us becomes a scene of moral discipline; and that in the hours when we are most unconscious of it, an influence is perpetually operating, by which our moral feelings are awakened, and our moral sensibility exercised. Whether in the scenery of nature, amid the works and inventions of men, amid the affections of home, or in the intercourse of general society, the material forms which surround us are secretly but incessantly influencing our character and dispositions. And in the hours of the most innocent delight, while we are conscious of nothing but the pleasures we enjoy, the beneficence of Him that made us is employed in conducting a secret discipline, by which our moral improvement is consulted, and those sentiments and principles are formed, which are afterwards to create not only our own genuine honour, but the happiness of all with whom it is our fortune to be connected.

There is yet, however, a greater expression which the appearances of the material world are fitted to convey, and a more important influence which, in the design of nature, they are destined to produce upon us; their influence I mean in leading us directly to RELIGIOUS sentiment. Had organic enjoyment been the only object of our formation, it would have been sufficient to establish senses for the reception of these enjoyments. But if the promises of our nature are greater; if it is destined to a nobler conclusion; if it is enabled to look to the Author of Being himself, and to feel its proud relation to HIM; then nature, in all its aspects around us, ought only to be felt as signs of his providence, and as conducting us, by the universal language of these signs, to the throne of the DEITY.

How much this is the case with every pure and innocent mind, I flatter myself few of my readers will require any illustration. Wherever, in fact, the eye of man opens upon any sublime or any beautiful scene of nature, the first impression is to consider it as designed, as the *effect* or workmanship of the Author of nature, and as significant of his power, his wisdom, or his goodness: and perhaps it is chiefly for *this fine* issue, that the heart of man is *thus finely touched*, that devotion may spring from delight; that the imagination, in the midst of its highest enjoyment, may be led to terminate in the only object in which it finally can repose; and that all the noblest convictions, and confidences of religion, may be acquired in the simple school of nature, and amid the scenes which perpetually surround us. Wherever we observe, accordingly, the workings of the human mind, whether in its rudest or its most improved appearances, we every where see this union of devotional sentiment with sensibility to the expressions of natural scenery. It calls forth the hymn of the infant bard, as well as the anthem of the poet of classic times. It prompts the nursery tale of superstition, as well as the demonstration of the school of philosophy. There is no era so barbarous in which man has existed, in which the traces are not to be seen of the alliance which he has felt between earth and heaven; or of the conviction he has acquired of the mind that created nature, by the signs which it exhibits: and amid the wildest, as amid the most genial scenes of an uncultivated world, the rude altar of the savage every where marks the emotions that swelled in his bosom when he erected it to the awful or the beneficent deities, whose imaginary presence it records. In ages of civilization and refinement, this union of devotional sentiment with sensibility to the beauties of natural scenery, forms one of the most characteristic marks of human improvement, and may be traced in every art which professes to give delight to the imagination. The funeral urn, and the inscription to the dead, present themselves every where as the most interesting incidents in the scenes of ornamental nature. In the landscape of the painter, the columns of the temple, or the spire of the church, rise amid the ceaseless luxuriance of vegetable life, and by their contrast, give the mighty moral to the scene, which we love, even while we dread it; the powers of music have reached only their highest perfection when they have been devoted to the services of religion; and the description of the genuine poet has seldom concluded without some hymn to the Author of the universe, or some warm appeal to the devotional sensibility of mankind.

Alison.

§ 94. *The Beauty of the human Countenance depends on Expression.*

If the real beauty of the human countenance arises from the union of certain forms and colours, that are originally beautiful, then every man ought to feel the sentiment of beauty in those cases alone, where those certain appearances were united. Of the truth of this proposition every man is a judge. I will presume, on the contrary, to say, that there is no man who has ever felt the sentiment of beauty, who will not acknowledge, that he has felt it in the most various and even opposite conformations of features; that he has felt, that instead of being governed by any physical law of form or colour, it has been governed by the individual circumstances of the countenance; that whenever it has been felt, it has been felt as significant of some pleasing or interesting disposition of mind; that the union of every feature and colour has been experienced as beautiful, when it was felt as expressive of amiable or interesting sentiment; and that, in fact, the only limit to the beauty of the human countenance, is the limit which separates vice from virtue: which separates the dispositions or affections we approve, from those which we disapprove or despise.

If this evidence should be insufficient, there is a yet stronger one, which arises from the usual language of mankind. We hear, every day, the admiration of beauty:—Ask, then, the enthusiast to explain to you, in what this beauty consists. Did he feel that it were in any certain conformation of features, or any precise tone of colouring that beauty consists, he would tell you minutely the forms and proportions and colours of this admired countenance; and were this the law of your nature, you could feel it only by this physical description. But is it thus, in fact, that the communication is made? Is it not, on the contrary, by stating the *expression* which this countenance conveys to him? Are not the forms and magnitude of the features, and the tone and degree of colouring, made all subservient in his description, to the character of mind he wishes to convey to you? And do you not feel, at the same time, that if he succeeds in persuading you of the lovely or interesting expression of the countenance, you take for granted, at once, that whatever may be the form of the features, or the nature of the colouring, the countenance itself has that simplicity and strength of expression which justifies the admiration of the person who describes it? All this, however, which may happen every day, is utterly inexplicable upon any other principle, than the foundation of beauty in expression; and the language itself would be unintelligible, if it arose only from some definite form of features, or definite appearance of colour.

The observation may be extended to the usual and habitual language of the world. There is no one who must not have observed, that the description of human beauty in common life, is always by terms significant of its expression. When we say that a countenance is noble, or magnanimous, or heroic, or gentle, or feeling, or melancholy, we convey at once to every hearer, a belief of some degree of sublimity or beauty; but no one ever asks us to describe the form of the features which compose it. When we differ, in the same manner, with regard to individual beauty, we do not support ourselves by any physical investigation of features. It is the *character* of the countenance we disagree in: and when we feel that this character is either unmeaning, or expressive of unpleasing dispositions, no conformation of features, and no splendour of colours, will ever render it beautiful to us. How much this is the case in society; how much the opinion of beauty is dependent upon the character of the mind which observes it; how profusely the good find beauty in every class of mankind around them; how much, on the contrary, the habits of vice tend to obliterate all the genuine beauty of nature to the vicious, must, to every man of common thought, have been the subject both of pleasing and of melancholy observation.

It is observable, in the same manner, that the most beautiful countenance is not permanently and uniformly beautiful, as it necessarily would be, if this beauty arose from any original law of our nature; but that its beauty is always dependent upon the nature of the temporary dispositions, or qualities of mind which it signifies. Every man who has had the good fortune to live in the society of beautiful women, must often have observed, that there were many days of his life, and many hours in every day, when he was altogether insensible to their beauty.

The little unmeaning and uninteresting details of domestic life; the usual cares and concerns of female duty; sometimes, perhaps, the irritations and disturbances of domestic economy, produce expressions which are neither interesting nor affecting; and, while they produce these, the beauty of the countenance (however latently great) is unfelt and unobserved. Whenever the countenance assumes the expression of any amiable or interesting emotion, the beauty of it immediately returns.

While there is scarcely any countenance that thus remains beautiful under the expression of vulgar or uninteresting emotions, and none which can preserve it under the dominion of vicious or improper dispositions, it may at the same time be observed, that there are very few countenances which are not raised into beauty, by the influence of amiable or lofty expression. They, who have had the happiness to witness the effects of sudden joy or unlooked-for hope in the countenances, even of the lowest of the people;—who have attended to the influence of sorrow, or sympathy, in the expression of faces unknown to affectation—they, still more, who have ever looked steadily upon the bed of sickness or of death, and have seen the influences of submission and of resignation upon every feature of the suffering or expiring countenance, can, I am persuaded, well tell, that there is scarcely any form of features which such interesting and lofty expressions cannot and do not exalt into beauty. It is on the same account, that the young who live familiarly together, are so seldom sensible to each other's beauty. The countenance, however beautiful, must often appear to them with very unmeaning and uninteresting expressions: the quiet detail of domestic life gives birth to no strong emotions in the countenances of either; they meet without animation, and they separate without tenderness; the habits of simple friendship call forth no transports of passion, and they go abroad into less known societies, to look for those agitations of hope or fear which they do not experience at home. To lovers, on the contrary, and for the same reason, every look and every feature is beautiful, because they are expressive to them of the most delightful emotions which their age can feel; because the countenance is then animated with expressions the most amiable and genuine which it ever can display, and still more, perhaps, because they are the signs to them of those imaginary scenes of future happiness, in the promise of which youth and love are so happily profuse.

It is the same principle which is the obvious cause of the infrequency of beauty among the lower orders. Something of this is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the influences of climate, and of weather, and to the negligence of those arts, by which, in the higher ranks of life, the physical beauty, at least of feature and of complexion, is so assiduously preserved. But the principal cause of it is in the character of mind, which such situations too naturally create. They who live for subsistence cannot live for beauty. The occupations in which they are engaged, the modes of life to which they are doomed, are little consistent with any amiable or interesting emotions; and their countenances, therefore, (however latently beautiful,) express nothing to us but low care or painful occupation. In their usual hours, therefore, their beauty is scarcely more than that of youth and health: and we observe it with satisfaction rather than pleasure. Let us follow them, however, from these vulgar and degrading occupations, into the scenes of their gaiety and enjoyment

—let us follow them into scenes of distress or sympathy, when finer emotions are excited, or when their countenances waken into correspondent expression, and we shall be astonished to find, that amid the most common features, beauty arises, and amid the most common forms, grace is to be found. In every country of Europe, I believe, in the same manner, the traveller has felt that the greatest beauty exists among women of the highest rank, or in those who live in affluence and independence; and it ought to be so. They who live not for subsistence, but for society; who, from their earliest days are unbroken by labour, or by care; who, still more, exist for their hour only in the search of admiration, are under the necessity of gaining it by every flattery to the feelings of others, by assuming virtues if they possess them not, and by counterfeiting, for the time at least, every disposition of mind and every expression of countenance which renders society amiable, or woman lovely.

Observations of this kind may be extended to every scene almost of our intercourse with mankind. I presume only to add the following, which perhaps every one of my readers can verify by their own experience.

Were the beauty of the human countenance dependent altogether upon certain forms or colours, it would be very difficult to account for those different beauties of age or sex, in which all men and all ages have agreed. If we consider them as arising from the expression of those qualities or dispositions which we expect and love in sex and in age, we shall find no difficulty in reconciling the facts with the theory. In men and in women, every countenance is to a certain degree beautiful, which is expressive of interesting or amiable dispositions: and from the cradle to the grave, every conformation of the human countenance is in some measure beautiful, which is significant of the qualities or character of mind, which we think that age ought to display.

There is, however, a difference in this respect; and it is obviously with very different sentiments that we regard male and female beauty. The one we regard with love and admiration, the other scarcely with more than satisfaction: of these different sentiments the account is simple. The forms of the male countenance in manhood, are not in general expressive of very amiable qualities, nor do we expect them. It is spirit, thought, resolution, which we look for as the predominant expressions of that age; but none of these are expressions extremely interesting to us, and all of them may be painful or exaggerated. The dispositions of mind, on the contrary, that we look for in the female countenance, are modesty, humility, timidity, sensibility, and kindness. These are dispositions which we never observe without deep emotion. They are not only delightful in themselves, but they are such as we expect in that sex; and there is no expression of them which does not affect us, both with the tenderness of love and with the sentiment of propriety. But while this is the case with the countenance of manhood, it is not the same (as every one has observed) with other periods of male existence. Infancy is equally beautiful in the one sex as in the other, and the early youth of man, (before it is corrupted by the business of the world,) is not unfrequently susceptible of as great a degree of beauty as is, perhaps, ever to be found in human conformation. In old age again, the male countenance reassumes, as it were, its beauty; because the character it expresses, the disposition which it displays, and still more, the melancholy contrast which we draw between its maturity and its decline, affect us with emotions of a far more profound and exquisite kind, than we ever experienced in the noon-day of its strength. *Alison.*

§ 95. *Ancient and modern Oratory compared.*

At the revival of letters in modern Europe, Eloquence, together with her sister muses, awoke, and shook the poppies from her brow. But their torpors still tingled in her veins. In the interval her voice was gone; her favourite languages were extinct; her organs were no longer attuned to harmony, and her hearers could no longer understand her speech. The discordant jargon of feudal anarchy had banished the musical dialects, in which she had always delighted. The theatres of her former triumphs were either deserted, or they were filled with the babblers of sophistry and chicane. She shrunk intuitively from the forum, for the last object she remembered to have seen there was the head of her darling Cicero, planted upon the rostrum. She ascended the tribunals of justice; there she found her child, Persuasion, manacled and pinioned by the letter of the law; there she beheld an image of herself, stammering in barbarous Latin, and staggering under the lumber of a thousand volumes. Her heart fainted within her. She lost all confidence in herself. Together with her irresistible powers, she lost proportionably the consideration of the world, until, instead of comprising the whole system of public education, she found herself excluded from the circle of sciences, and declared an outlaw from the realms of learning. She was not however doomed to eternal silence. With the progress of freedom and of liberal science, in various parts of modern Europe, she obtained access to mingle in the deliberations of their parliaments. With labour and difficulty she learned their languages, and lent her aid in giving them form and polish. But she has never recovered the graces of her former beauty, nor the energies of her ancient vigour.

The immeasurable superiority of ancient over modern oratory is one of the most remarkable circumstances, which offer themselves to the scrutiny of reflecting minds, and it is in the languages, the institutions, and the manners of modern Europe, that the solution of a phenomenon, so extraordinary, must be sought. The assemblies of the people, of the select councils, or of the senate in Athens and Rome, were held for the purpose of real deliberation. The fate of measures was not decided before they were proposed. Eloquence produced a powerful effect, not only upon the minds of the hearers, but upon the issue of the deliberation. In the only countries of modern Europe, where the semblance of deliberative assemblies has been preserved, corruption, here in the form of executive influence, there in the guise of party spirit, by introducing a more compendious mode of securing decisions, has crippled the sublimest efforts of oratory, and the votes upon questions of magnitude to the interest of nations are all told, long before the questions themselves are submitted to discussion. Hence those nations, which for ages have gloried in the devotion to literature, science, and the arts, have never been able to exhibit a specimen of deliberative oratory, that can bear a comparison with those transmitted down to us from antiquity.

Religion indeed has opened one new avenue to the career of eloquence. Amidst the sacrifices of paganism to her three hundred thousand gods, amidst her sagacious and solemn consultations in the entrails of slaughtered brutes, in the flight of birds, and the feeding of fowls, it had never entered her imagination to call upon the pontiff, the haruspex, or the augur, for discourses to the people, on the nature of their duties to their Maker, their fellow-mortals, and themselves. This was an idea, too august to be mingled with the absurd and ridiculous, or profligate and barbarous rites of her deplorable superstition. It is an institution, for which mankind are indebted to christianity; introduced by the Founder himself of this divine religion, and in every point of view worthy of its high original. Its effects have been to soften the tempers and purify the morals of mankind; not in so high a degree as benevolence could wish, but enough to call forth our strains of warmest gratitude to that good being, who provides us with the means of promoting our own felicity, and gives us power to stand, though leaving us free to fall. Here then is an unbounded and inexhaustible field for eloquence, never explored by the ancient orators; and here alone have the modern Europeans cultivated the art with much success. In vain should we enter the halls of justice, in vain should we listen to the debates of senates for strains of oratory, worthy of remembrance, beyond the duration of the occasion, which called them forth. The art of embalming thought by oratory, like that of embalming bodies by aromatics, would have perished, but for the exercises of religion. These alone have in the latter ages furnished discourses, which remind us, that eloquence is yet a faculty of the human mind.

Among the causes, which have contributed thus to depress the oratory of modern times, must be numbered the indifference, with which it has been treated, as an article of education. The ancients had fostered an opinion, that this talent was in a more than usual degree the creature of discipline; and it is one of the maxims, handed down to us, as the result of their experience, that men must be born to poetry, and bred to eloquence; that the bard is always the child of nature, and the orator always the issue of instruction. The doctrine seems to be not entirely without foundation, but was by them carried in both its parts to an extravagant excess.

The foundations for the oratorical talent, as well as those of the poetical faculty, must be laid in the bounties of nature; and as the muse in Homer, impartial in her distribution of good and evil, struck the bard with blindness, when she gave him the powers of song, her sister not unfrequently, by a like mixture of tenderness and rigor, bestows the blessing of wisdom, while she refuses the readiness of utterance. Without entering however into a disquisition which would lead me far beyond the limits of this occasion, I may remark, that the modern Europeans have run into the adverse extreme, and appear, during a considerable period, in their system of public education, to have passed upon eloquence a sentence of proscription. Even when they studied RHETORIC, as a theory, they neglected ORATORY, as an art; and while assiduously unfolding to their pupils the bright displays of Greek and Roman eloquence, they never attempted to make them eloquent themselves. *J. Q. Adams.*

§ 96. *On Oratory, Art.*

Oratory then is an art. This point has not been seriously controverted in modern times; though among the ancients it was debated with great warmth and ingenuity. A more important question, however, which has been agitated in all ages, and will perhaps never be placed altogether beyond the reach of controversy, is whether oratory can be numbered among the useful arts? Whether its tendencies are not as strong to the perversion, as to the improvement of men? Whether it has not more frequently been made an engine of evil, than of good to the world? Or whether at best it is not one of those frivolous arts, which consists more in arbitrary, multifarious subdivisions and hard words, than in any real, practical utility. The question is to you, my friends, of so much importance, that in justice to you, to myself, and to the institution, under which I address you, I think a more ample consideration of its merits proper and necessary. Your time and your talents are precious, not only to yourselves, but to your connexions, and to your country. They ought therefore not to be wasted upon any trifling or unprofitable, and much less to be mispent upon any mischievous pursuit. In the observations, which I shall now submit to you, it is my intention to suggest the peculiar utility of the art, in the situation of this country, and adapted to the circumstances, which may probably call upon many of you for its exercise, in the progress of your future lives.

In the state of society, which exists among us, some professional occupation is, to almost every man in the community, the requisition of necessity, as well as of duty. None of us liveth to himself; and as we live to our families, by the several relations and employments of domestic life, to our friends, by the intercourse of more intimate society and mutual good offices, so we live to our country and to mankind in general, by the performance of those services, and by the discharge of those labours, which belong to the profession we have chosen, as the occupation of our lives. Whatsoever it is incumbent upon a man to do it is surely expedient to do well. Now of the three learned professions, which more especially demand the preparatory discipline of a learned education, there are two, whose most important occupations consist in the act of public speaking. And who can doubt, but that in the sacred desk, or at the bar, the man, who speaks well, will enjoy a larger share of reputation, and be more useful to his fellow creatures, than the divine or the lawyer of equal learning and integrity, but unblest with the talent of oratory?

But the pulpit is especially the throne of modern eloquence. There it is, that speech is summoned to realize the fabled wonders of the orphean lyre. The preacher has no control over the will of his audience, other than the influence of his discourse. Yet, as the ambassador of Christ, it is his great and awful duty to call sinners to repentance. His only weapon is the voice; and with this he is to appal the guilty, and to reclaim the infidel; to rouse the indifferent, and to shame the scorner. He is to inflame the lukewarm, to encourage the timid, and to cheer the desponding believer. He is to pour the healing balm of consolation into the bleeding heart of sorrow, and to sooth with celestial hope the very agonies of death. Now tell me who it is, that will best possess and most effectually exercise these more than magic powers? Who is it, that will most effectually stem the torrent of human passions, and calm the raging waves of human vice and folly? Who is it, that, with the voice of a Joshua, shall control the course of nature herself in the perverted heart, and arrest the luminaries of wisdom and virtue in their rapid revolutions round this little world of man? Is it the cold and languid speaker, whose words fall in such sluggish and drowsy motion from his lips, that they can promote nothing but the slumbers of his auditory, and administer opiates to the body, rather than stimulants to the soul? Is it the unlettered fanatic, without method, without reason; with incoherent raving, and vociferous ignorance, calculated to fit his hearers, not for the kingdom of heaven, but for a hospital of lunatics? Is it even the learned, ingenious, and pious minister of Christ, who, by neglect or contempt of the oratorical art, has contracted a whining, monotonous sing-song of delivery to exercise the patience of his flock, at the expense of their other Christian graces? Or is it the genuine orator of heaven, with a heart sincere, upright, and fervent; a mind stored with that universal knowledge, required as the foundation of the art; with a genius for the invention, a skill for the disposition, and a voice for the elocution of every argument to convince and of every sentiment to persuade? If then we admit, that the art of oratory qualifies the minister of the gospel to perform in higher perfection the duties of his station, we can no longer question, whether it be proper for his cultivation. It is more than proper; it is one of his most solemn and indispensable duties. If

> Nature never lends
> The smallest scruple of her excellence,
> But like a thrifty goddess, she determines
> Herself the glory of a creditor,
> Both thanks and use,

more especially is the obligation of exerting every talent, of improving every faculty incumbent upon him, who undertakes the task of instructing, of reforming, and of guiding in the paths of virtue and religion, his fellow mortals.

The practitioner at the bar, having a just idea of his professional duties, will consider himself as the minister of justice among men, and feel it his obligation to maintain and protect the rights of those, who entrust their affairs to his charge, whether they are rights of person or of property; whether public or private; whether of civil or of criminal jurisdiction. The litigation of these rights in the courts of justice often requires the exertion of the most exalted intellectual powers; and it is by public speaking alone, that they can be exerted. For the knowledge of the law the learning of the closet may suffice; for its application to the circumstances of the individual case, correct reasoning and a sound judgment will be competent. But when an intricate controversy must be unfolded in a perspicuous manner to the mind of the judge, or a tangled tissue of blended facts and law must be familiarly unravelled to a jury; that is, at the very crisis, when the contest is to be decided by the authority of the land, learning and judgment are of no avail to the client or his counsel, without the assistance of an eloquent voice to make them known. Then it is, that all the arts of the orator are called into action, and that every part of a rhetorical discourse finds its place for the success of the cause. The diamond in the mine is no brighter, than the pebble upon the beach. From the hand of the lapidary must it learn to sparkle in the solar beam, and to glitter in the imperial crown. The crowd of clients, the profits of practice, and the honours of reputation, will all inevitably fly to him, who is known to possess, not only the precious treasures of legal learning, but the keys, which alone can open them to the public eye. Hence if personal utility, the acquisition of wealth, of honour, and of fame, is the pursuit of the lawyer, the impulse of eloquence can alone speed him in his course. If relative utility, the faculty of discharging in the utmost perfection the duties of his station, and the means of being most serviceable to his fellow creatures, is the nobler object of his ambition, still he can soar to that elevated aim only upon the pinions of eloquence.

J. Q. Adams.

§ 97. *On ideal Excellence in Oratory.*

The Grecian philosophers first conceived, and Plato has largely expatiated upon, what they call the beautiful, and the good, in the abstract. Beauty and goodness are properties, and, as to any object perceptible to the senses, neither of them can exist without some substance, in which they may exist. A good man, or a beautiful woman, is perceptible to the eye and to the reason of us all; but the qualities themselves we cannot readily discern, without the aid of imagination. But as imperfection is stamped upon every work of nature, the imagination is able to conceive of goodness and beauty more perfect, than they can be found in any of the works of nature, or of man. This creature of the imagination Plato designates by the name of the good and fair. That is, goodness and beauty, purified from all the dross of natural imperfection. And then, by one step more of the imagination, we are required to personify these sublime abstractions, and call up to the eye of fancy images, in which goodness and beauty would appear, if they could assume a human shape. This principle was applied to the fine arts, as well as to morals; and the painters and sculptors, in imitating the productions of nature, improved upon them by these ideal images, and created those wonders of art, which still excite the astonishment of every beholder. The antique statues of the Apollo and Venus have thus been considered, for nearly three thousand years, the perfect models of human beauty. Such exquisite proportions, such an assemblage of features was never found in any human form. But the idea was in the mind of the artist, and his chisel has given it a local habitation in the minds of others. It was the conception and the pursuit of this ideal beauty, which produced all the wonders of Grecian art. Cicero applied it to eloquence. It appears to have been the study of his whole life to form an idea of a perfect orator, and of exhibiting his image to the world. In this treatise he has concentrated the result of all his observation, experience, and reflection. It is the idealized image of a speaker, in the mind of Cicero; what a speaker should be; what no speaker ever will be; but what every speaker should devote the labours of his life to approximate.

Let it be remembered, that this inflexible, unremitting pursuit of ideal and unattainable excellence is the source of all the real excellence, which the world has ever seen. It is the foundation of every thing great and good, of which man can boast. It is one of the proofs, that the soul of man is immortal; and it is at the foundation of the whole doctrine of christianity. It is the root of all real excellence in religion, in morals, and in taste. It was so congenial to the mind of Cicero, that in the treatise, of which I am now speaking, he took the most elaborate pains, and the most exquisite pleasure, in setting it forth. He addressed it to his friend Brutus, at whose desire it was written; and in one of the familiar epistles Cicero declares, that he wishes this work to be considered, as the test of his capacity; that it contains the quintessence of all his faculties.

The principal difficulty of the subject was to settle a standard of eloquence; for the original controversy between the rival Asiatic and Attic schools, which I have mentioned, was so far from being decided, that it had given rise to a third system, partaking of both the others, and usually known by the name of the Rhodian manner. Cicero therefore determines, that there are subjects, peculiarly fitted to each of these three modes of speaking, and that the perfection of the orator consists in the proper use and variation of them all, according to the occasion. The most remarkable example of which, he thinks, is to be found in the famous oration of Demosthenes for Ctesiphon ; commonly called the oration for the crown. In the distinction, which he draws between the schools of Isocrates and of Aristotle, we find the true criterion for judging their respective pretensions. The first he pronounces to have been the cradle of eloquence. Its florid colours, its dazzling splendours, its studied and laborious decorations, he thinks peculiarly adapted to representation, and not to action ; to the first essays of youth, and not to the serious labours of manhood. But it is in judicial controversies, where the conflict of rights must be decided by the conflict of talents, that the manhood, the highest energies of the art, must be exerted. Here all the resources of invention, of selection, of arrangement, of style, and of action, must successively be applied, and here alone can the highest perfection of the art be found.

To professional speakers, the Orator of Cicero is a work, which they should familiarize and master, at the very threshold of their studies. It contains a lively image of what they ought to be, and a specific indication of what they ought to do. It is in many passages a comment upon the writer's own orations. It points out the variations of his style and manner, in many of those eloquent discourses, and gives you the reasons, which inspired his sublime, indignant vehemence in the accusation of Verres and of Catiline ; his temperate, insinuating elegance upon the Manilian law, and the solicitations for Ligarius ; and his close and irresistible cogency of argument in disclosing and elucidating the intricate case of Caecina. I would particularly recommend it to those of you, who may hereafter engage in the profession of the law, to read over these orations, and compare the management of the cause with this account, given by the author, of his motives for proceeding as he did in each of them.

But to whatever occupation your future inclinations or destinies may direct you, that pursuit of ideal excellence, which constituted the plan of Cicero's Orator, and the principle of Cicero's life, if profoundly meditated, and sincerely adopted, will prove a never failing source of virtue and of happiness. I say profoundly meditated, because no superficial consideration can give you a conception of the real depth and extent of this principle. I say sincerely adopted, because its efficacy consists not in resolutions, much less in pretensions ; but in action. Its affectation can only disclose the ridiculous coxcomb, or conceal the detestable hypocrite ; nor is it in occasional, momentary gleams of virtue and energy, preceded and followed by long periods of indulgence or inaction, that this sublime principle can be recognised. It must be the steady purpose of a life, maturely considered, deliberately undertaken, and inflexibly pursued, through all the struggles of human opposition, and all the vicissitudes of fortune. It must mark the measure of your duties in the relations of domestic, of social, and of public life. Must guard from presumption your rapid moments of prosperity, and nerve with fortitude your lingering hours of misfortune. It must mingle with you in the busy murmurs of the city, and retire in silence with you to the shades of solitude. Like hope it must "travel through, nor quit you when you die." Your guide amid the dissipations of youth ; your counsellor in the toils of manhood ; your companion in the leisure of declining age. It must, it will, irradiate the darkness of dissolution ; will identify the consciousness of the past with the hope of futurity ; will smooth the passage from this to a better world ; and link the last pangs of expiring nature with the first rapture of never ending joy. *J. Q. Adams.*

§ 98. *On Deliberative Oratory.*

The principles of deliberative oratory are important also in another point of view ; inasmuch as they are applicable to the ordinary concerns of life. Whoever in the course of human affairs is called to give advice, or to ask a favour of another, must apply to the same principles of action, as those, which the deliberative orator must address. The arguments which persuade an assembly, are the same which are calculated to persuade an individual ; and in speaking to a deliberative body the orator can often employ no higher artifice, than to consider himself as discoursing to a single man.

The objects of deliberative eloquence then are almost co-extensive with human affairs. They embrace every thing which can be a subject of advice, of exhortation, of consolation, or of petition. The most important scenes of deliberative oratory however in these states are the congress of the union, and the state legislature. The objects of their deliberation affect the interests of individuals and of the nation, in the highest degree. In seeking the sources of deliberative argument I shall therefore so modify the rules, generally to be observed, as to bear constant reference to them. They include all the subjects of legislation, of taxation, of public debt, public credit, and public revenue ; of the management of public property ; of commerce ; treaties and alliances ; peace and war.

Suppose yourself then, as a member of a deliberative assembly, deliberating upon some question involving these great and important concerns ; desirous of communicating your own sentiments, and of influencing the decision of the body you are to address. Your means of persuasion are to be derived from three distinct general sources ; having reference respectively, first to the subject of deliberation ; secondly to the body deliberating ; and thirdly to yourself, the speaker.

1. In considering the subject of deliberation, your arguments may result from the circumstances of legality, of possibility, of probability, of facility, of necessity, or of contingency.

The argument of legality must always be modified by the extent of authority with which the deliberating body is invested. In its nature it is an argument only applicable to the negative side of the question. It is an objection, raised against the measure under consideration, as being contrary to law. It can therefore have no weight in cases where the deliberating body itself has the power of changing the law. Thus in a town meeting it would be a decisive objection against any measure proposed, that it would infringe a law of the state. But in the legislature of the commonwealth this would be no argument, because that body is empowered to change the law. Again, in the state legislature a measure may be assailed, as contrary to a law of the Union ; and the objection, if well founded, must be fatal to the measure proposed ; though it could have no influence upon a debate in congress. There however the same argument may be adduced in a different form, if the proposition discussed interferes with any stipulation by treaty, or with the constitution of the United States. The argument of illegality therefore is equivalent to denial of the powers of the deliberating body. It is of great and frequent use in all deliberative discussions; but it is not always that which is most readily listened to by the audience. Men are seldom inclined to abridge their own authority; and the orator, who questions the competency of his hearers to act upon the subject in discussion, must be supported by proof strong enough to control their inclinations, as well as to convince their reason.

The arguments of possibility and of necessity are those, which first command the consideration of the speaker, whose object is persuasion. Since, if impossibility on the one hand, or necessity on the other, be once ascertained, there is no room left for further deliberation. But, although nothing more can be required for dissuasion, than to show that the intended purpose is impracticable, barely to show its possibility can have very little influence in a debate; and it becomes the province of the speaker to consider its probability and facility; insisting upon every circumstance which contributes to strengthen these.

It is to be remarked, that the task of dissuasion or opposition is much easier to the orator, than that of persuasion; because for the rejection of a measure it is sufficient to show, either that it is impracticable, or inexpedient. But for its adoption, both its possibility and its expediency must be made to appear. The proposer of the measure must support both the alternatives; the opponent needs only to substantiate one of them.

In discussing the probabilities and facilities of a measure, the speaker often indulges himself in the use of amplification, which here consists in the art of multiplying the incidents, favourable to his purpose, and presenting them in such aspects, as to give each other mutual aid and relief. As in the arguments of impossibility and necessity, he borrows from demonstrative oratory the art of approximation, and represents as impossible that, which is only very difficult, or as absolutely necessary that, which is of extreme importance.

The argument of contingency, or, as it is styled by the ancient rhetoricians, the argument from the event, derives a recommendation of the measure in debate from either alternative of a successful issue or of failure. An admirable instance of this kind of argument is contained in that advice of Cardinal Wolsey to Cromwell.

"Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
To silence envious tongues. Be just and fear not;
Let all the ends, thou aim'st at, be thy country's,
Thy God's, and truth's; then if thou fall'st, O Cromwell,
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr."

2. With regard to the deliberating body, there are two views, in which they must be presented to the speaker's reflections, as accessible to persuasion; the motives, by which they are to be stimulated, and their own manners and character. As motives of persuasion, an orator may address himself to the sense of duty, of honour, of interest, or of passion; motives, which I have here arranged according to the comparative weight which they ought respectively to carry, but which in the influence, which they really possess over most deliberative assemblies, should be ranked in precisely an inverted order.

Of the sense of duty may be observed, what I have already said of arguments, pointed against the power of the audience. They are indeed only different modifications of the same thing. To call upon the auditory to perform a duty is to speak the language of command; it virtually denies the power of deliberation; and, although the force and efficacy of the appeal may be admitted, it is seldom listened to with pleasure, and always rather controls, than persuades the will.

The most proper and the most powerful arguments, which are usually employed for the purposes of persuasion, are those, addressed to the sense of honour and of interest. But in the choice and management of these you are to consult in a special manner the character of your audience; for one class of men will be most powerfully swayed by motives of honour, while another will most readily yield to the impulse of interest. "The discourse must be accommodated," I am now speaking the words of Cicero, "not only to the truth, but to the taste of the hearers. Observe then first of all, that there are two different descriptions of men; the one rude and ignorant, who always set profit before honour; the other polished and civilized, who prefer honour to every thing. Urge then to the latter of these classes considerations of praise, of honour, of glory, of fidelity, of justice; in short of every virtue. To the former present images of gain, of emolument, of thrift; nay, in addressing this kind of men, you must even allure them with the bait of pleasure. Pleasure, always hostile to virtue, always corrupting by fraudulent imitation the very nature of goodness herself, is yet most eagerly pursued by the worst of men; and by them often preferred not only to every instigation of honour, but even to the dictates of necessity. Remember too, that mankind are more anxious to escape evil, than to obtain good; less eager to acquire honour, than to avoid shame. Who ever sought honour, glory, praise, or fame of any kind, with the same ardour, that we fly from those most cruel of afflictions, ignominy, contumely, and scorn? Again, there is a class of men, naturally inclined to honourable sentiments, but corrupted by evil education and vitiated opinions. Is it your purpose then to exhort or persuade, remember that the task before you is that of teaching how to obtain good, and eschew evil. Are you speaking to men of liberal education, enlarge upon topics of praise and honour; insist with the keenest earnestness upon those virtues, which contribute to the common safety and advantage of mankind. But if you are discoursing to gross, ignorant, untutored minds, to them hold up profit, lucre, money-making, pleasure, and escape from pain. Deter them also by the prospect of shame and ignominy; for no man, however insensible to positive glory, is made of such impenetrable stuff, as not to be vehemently moved by the dread of infamy and disgrace." This passage of Cicero, extracted from the dialogue between himself and his son, I recommend to your meditations, as the truly paternal advice of a father to his child. You will find it not only a most useful guide in the practice of deliberative oratory; but, if properly applied, it will furnish you a measure for many an audience, and many a speaker. It is however proper to remind you, that arguments of interest are in some degree purified of their dross by the constitution of our principal deliberative assemblies. They are representative bodies. Their measures operate upon their constituents, more than upon themselves. The interests, to which you appeal in arguing to them, are not their individual interests, but those of the nation. They are therefore often identified with the more elevated topics of honour; since to promote the interest of the people is the highest honour of the legislator. This however is sufficiently understood by most of our deliberative orators. As for you, my young friends, whenever you may be called to deliberate upon the concerns of your country, I trust you will feel, that the honour, as well as the interest of the public, is the object of your pursuit; and without ever forgetting the sacred regard to the general interest, which becomes a virtuous citizen, you will still perceive the immeasurable distance between those regions of the soul, which are open only to the voice of honour, and those which are trodden by the foot of avarice.

In all numerous assemblies the characters, opinions, and prejudices of the auditors will be various; a certain proportion of them will belong to each of the classes, enumerated by Cicero. In such cases the deliberative orator will find it adviseable to introduce a variety of arguments; some addressed to the generous, and some to the selfish feelings; some to the coarsest, and some to the most refined principles of action. But I cannot with Quinctilian discuss the question, how far an orator may exert his talents of persuasion for base and dishonourable purposes; or urge his hearers to actions, which he himself would detest or despise. In judicial controversies, where the discussion relates to time and actions irretrievably past, it may often be the fortune of the orator to defend what he cannot justify; and in the most rigorous court of justice or of honour, he may say, like Shakspeare's Isabella,

> "I something do excuse the thing I hate,
> For his advantage, whom I dearly love."

But of deliberative eloquence the first principle is sincerity. No honest man would advise what he cannot approve; and a counsellor should disdain to recommend that which he would not join in executing himself. And this leads me to the third general head, from which the means of persuasion are to be drawn in deliberative oratory, the speaker himself.

3. The eloquence of deliberation will necessarily take much of its colour from the orator himself. He must be careful to suit his discourse to his own character and situation. In early life he may endeavour to make strong impression by the airy splendour of his style, contrasted with the unaffected modesty of his address. If advanced in years, and elevated in reputation and dignity, the gravity of his manner and the weight of sentiment should justly correspond with the reverence due to his station. It is in deliberative assemblies, more than upon any other stage of public speaking, that the good opinion of his auditory is important to the speaker. The demonstrative orator, the lawyer at the bar, derive great advantage from a fair reputation and the good will of their hearers; but the peculiar province of the deliberative speaker is to advise; and what possible effect can be expected from advice, where there is no confidence in the adviser. This subject however is so important and so copious, that I shall reserve it for a separate lecture, in which I propose to consider those qualities of the heart and of the mind, which are or ought to be best adapted to acquire that benevolence of the auditory, which is so powerful an auxiliary to the power of speech.

In treating this part of the subject, Aristotle, according to his usual custom, has pursued his train of analysis to its deepest root, and to its minutest ramification. Assuming, as a fundamental position, that utility, that is the attainment of good or avoidance of evil, is the ultimate object of all deliberation, he proceeds to enumerate a catalogue of every thing, considered as a blessing by human beings. These blessings he divides into two classes; first of those, universally recognised, and positive; and second of those, which are only relative, and subject to controversy. Among the former he includes virtue, health, beauty, riches, eloquence, arts, and sciences. Among the latter are the least of two evils; the contrary to what your enemy desires; the esteem of the wise; what multitudes desire; and specific objects to individual men. The forms of government also modify the prevailing estimate of good and evil. The end of civil government, under a democracy, is liberty; under an oligarchy, property; under an aristocracy, law; and under a monarchy, security. These are all positive blessings for all mankind. But their relative importance is greatly enhanced, where they constitute the basis of the social compact. The deliberative orator, whose appeal must always be to the sentiments of good and evil, rooted in the minds of his auditory, must always adapt his discourse to that standard measure of the land.

The ancient practice of declamation was an ingenious and useful exercise for improving in the art of deliberative oratory. A character and a situation, generally known in history, were assumed; and the task of the declaimer was to compose and deliver a discourse suitable to them. The Greek and Roman historians introduce speeches of this kind in the midst of their narratives; and among them are so many examples of the most admirable eloquence, that we regret the cold accuracy of modern history, which has discarded this practice, without providing any adequate substitute in its stead.

As amplification has been said to be the favourite resort of demonstrative oratory, the allegation of examples is the most effectual support of deliberative discourses. There is nothing new under the sun. The future is little more than a copy of the past. What hath been shall be again. And to exhibit an image of the past is often to present the clearest prospect of the future. The examples, which are adduced successfully by the deliberative speaker, are of two kinds; first, fictitious inventions of his own, second, real events borrowed from historical fact. The first of these are called by Aristotle fables, and the second parables. The fable, which may be invented at the pleasure of the speaker, is more easily applied to his purpose; but the parable, always derived from matter of fact, makes a deeper impression upon the minds of the audience. In the rude ages of society, and among the uncultivated class of mankind, the power of fable, and still more of parable to influence the will, is scarcely conceivable upon mere speculative investigation. But it is demonstrated by the uniform tenor of all human experience. The fable of Menenius Agrippa stands conspicuous in the Roman annals. It pacified one of the most dangerous insurrections which ever agitated that turbulent but magnanimous people. The scriptures of the old testament bespeak the efficacy of these instruments in a manner no less energetic. But their unrivalled triumph is in the propagation of the christian gospel; whose exalted founder we are told "needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man;" and who delivered his incomparable system of morality altogether through the medium of fables and parables; both of which in the writings of the evangelists are included in the latter term. "And with many parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it; but without a parable spake he not unto them."*

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* Mark, iv. 33.

The principal feature in the style of deliberative oratory should be simplicity. Not that it disdains, but that it has seldom occasion for decoration. The speaker should be much more solicitous for the thought, than for the expression. This constitutes the great difference between the diction proper for this, and that, which best suits the two other kinds of oratory. Demonstrative eloquence, intended for show, delights in ostentatious ornament. The speaker is expected to have made previous preparation. His discourse is professedly studied, and all the artifices of speech are summoned to the gratification of the audience. The heart is cool for the reception, the mind is at leisure for the contemplation of polished periods, oratorical numbers, coruscations of metaphor, profound reflection, and subtle ingenuity. But deliberative discussions require little more than prudence and integrity. Even judicial oratory supposes a previous painful investigation of his subject by the speaker, and exacts an elaborate, methodical conduct of the discourse. But deliberative subjects often arise on a sudden, and allow of no premeditation. Hearers are disinclined to advice, which they perceive the speaker has been dressing up in his closet. Ambitious ornament should then be excluded, rather than sought. Plain sense, clear logic, and above all ardent sensibility, these are the qualities, needed by those who give, and those who take counsel. A profusion of brilliancy betrays a speaker more full of himself, than of his cause ; more anxious to be admired, than believed. The stars and ribands of princely favour may glitter on the breast of the veteran hero at a birth-day ball ; but, exposed to the rage of battle, they only direct the bullet to his heart. A deliberative orator should bury himself in his subject. Like a superintending providence, he should be visible only in his mighty works. Hence that universal prejudice, both of ancient and modern times, against written, deliberative discourses ; a prejudice which bade defiance to all the thunders of Demosthenes. In the midst of their most enthusiastic admiration of his eloquence, his countrymen nevertheless remarked, that his orations " smelt too much of the lamp."

Let it however be observed, that upon great and important occasions the deliberative orator may be allowed a more liberal indulgence of preparation. When the cause of ages and the fate of nations hangs upon the thread of a debate, the orator may fairly consider himself, as addressing not only his immediate hearers, but the world at large ; and all future times. Then it is, that, looking beyond the moment in which he speaks, and the immediate issue of the deliberation, he makes the question of an hour a question for every age and every region ; takes the vote of unborn millions upon the debate of a little senate, and incorporates himself and his discourse with the general history of mankind. On such occasions and at such times, the oration naturally and properly assumes a solemnity of manner and a dignity of language, commensurate with the grandeur of the cause. Then it is, that deliberative eloquence lays aside the plain attire of her daily occupation, and assumes the port and purple of the queen of the world. Yet even then she remembers, that majestic grandeur best comports with simplicity. Her crown and sceptre may blaze with the brightness of the diamond, but she must not, like the kings of the gorgeous east, be buried under a shower of barbaric pearls and gold.

J. Q. Adams.

§ 99. *Reflections upon seeing Mr.* POPE's *House at Binfield. In a Letter.*

Your letter found me just upon my return from an excursion into Berkshire, where I have been paying a visit to a friend, who is drinking the waters at Sunning-Hill. In one of my morning rides over that delightful country, I accidentally passed through a little village, which afforded me much agreeable meditation; as in times to come, perhaps, it will be visited by the lovers of the polite arts, with as much veneration as Virgil's tomb, or any other celebrated spot of antiquity. The place I mean is Binfield, where the Poet, to whom I am indebted (in common with every reader of taste) for so much exquisite entertainment, spent the earliest part of his youth. I will not scruple to confess, that I looked upon the scene where he planned some of those beautiful performances, which first recommended him to the notice of the world, with a degree of enthusiasm; and could not but consider the ground as sacred, that was impressed with the footsteps of a genius that undoubtedly does the highest honour to our age and nation.

The situation of mind in which I found myself upon this occasion, suggested to my remembrance a passage in Tully, which I thought I never so thoroughly entered into the spirit of before. That noble author, in one of his philosophical conversation-pieces, introduces his friend Atticus as observing the pleasing effect which scenes of this nature are wont to have upon one's mind: "Movemur enim," says that polite Roman, "nescio quo pacto, locis ipsis, in quibus eorum, quos diligimus aut admiramur, adsunt vestigia. Me quidem ipsæ illæ nostræ Athenæ, non tam operibus magnificis exquisitisque antiquorum artibus delectant, quam recordatione summorum virorum, ubi quisque habitare, ubi sedere, ubi disputare sit solitus."*

Thus, you see, I could defend myself by an example of great authority, were I in danger upon this occasion of being ridiculed as a romantic visionary. But I am too well acquainted with the refined sentiments of Orontes, to be under any apprehension he will condemn the impressions I have here acknowledged. On the contrary, I have often heard you mention with approbation, a circumstance of this kind which is related of Silius Italicus. The annual ceremonies which that poet performed at Virgil's sepulchre, gave you a more favourable opinion of his taste, you confessed, than any thing in his works was able to raise.

It is certain, that some of the greatest names of antiquity have distinguished themselves, by the high reverence they showed to the poetical character. Scipio, you may remember, desired to be laid in the same tomb with Ennius; and I am inclined to pardon that successful madman Alexander many of his extravagancies, for the generous regard he paid to the memory of Pindar, at the sacking of Thebes.

There seems, indeed, to be something in poetry that raises the professors of that very singular talent, far higher in the estimation of the world in general, than those who excel in any other of the refined arts. And accordingly we find that poets have been distinguished by antiquity with the most remarkable honours. Thus Homer, we are told, was deified at Smyrna; as the citizens of Mitylene stamped the image of Sappho upon their public coin: Anacreon received a solemn invitation to spend his days at Athens, and Hipparchus, the son of Pisistratus, fitted out a splendid vessel in order to transport him thither: and when Virgil came into the theatre at Rome, the whole audience rose up and saluted him, with the same respect as they would have paid to Augustus himself.

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*"We are affected, I know not how, by those places in which we see the traces of those whom we love or admire. Indeed, I am not so much delighted at Athens by the magnificent works and the exquisite arts of antiquity, as by the recollection of her great men, where they used to live, sit, and dispute."

Painting, one would imagine, has the fairest pretensions of rivalling her sister art in the number of admirers; and yet, where Apelles is mentioned once, Homer is celebrated a thousand times. Nor can this be accounted for by urging that the works of the latter are still extant, while those of the former have perished long since; for is not Milton's Paradise Lost more universally esteemed than Raphael's Cartoons?

The truth, I imagine, is, there are more who are natural judges of the harmony of numbers, than of the grace of proportions. One meets with but few who have not, in some degree at least, a tolerable ear; but a judicious eye is a far more uncommon possession. For as words are the universal medium, which all men employ in order to convey their sentiments to each other; it seems a just consequence, that they should be more generally formed for relishing and judging of performances in that way: whereas the art of representing ideas by means of lines and colours, lies more out of the road of common use, and is therefore less adapted to the taste of the general run of mankind.

I hazard this observation, in the hopes of drawing from you your sentiments upon a subject, in which no man is more qualified to decide; as indeed it is to the conversation of Orontes, that I am indebted for the discovery of many refined delicacies in the imitative arts, which, without his judicious assistance, would have lain concealed to me with other common observers. *Fitzosborne.*

§ 100. *On the Delicacy of every Author of Genius, with respect to his own performances. In a Letter.*

If the ingenious piece you communicated to me, requires any farther touches of your pencil, I must acknowledge the truth to be, what you are inclined to suspect, that my friendship has imposed upon my judgment. But though in the present instance your delicacy seems far too refined; yet, in general, I must agree with you, that works of the most permanent kind, are not the effects of a lucky moment, nor struck out at a single heat. The best performances, indeed, have generally cost the most labour; and that ease, which is so essential to fine writing, has seldom been attained without repeated and severe corrections: *Ludentis speciem dabit et torquebitur*,* is a motto that may be applied, I believe, to most successful authors of genius. With as much facility as the numbers of the natural Prior seem to have flowed from him, they were the result (if I am not misinformed) of much application: and a friend of mine, who undertook to transcribe one of the noblest performances of the finest genius that this, or perhaps any age can boast, has often assured me, that there is not a single line, as it is now published, which stands in conformity with the original manuscript. The truth is, every sentiment has its peculiar expression, and every word its precise place, which do not always immediately present themselves, and generally demand frequent trials, before they can be properly adjusted; not to mention the more important difficulties, which necessarily occur in settling the plan and regulating the higher parts which compose the structure of a finished work.

Those, indeed, who know what

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* The appearance of ease, the result of labour.

pangs it costs even the most fertile genius to be delivered of a just and regular production, might be inclined, perhaps, to cry out with the most ancient of authors, *Oh! that mine adversary had written a book!* A writer of refined taste has the continual mortification to find himself incapable of taking entire possession of that ideal beauty which warms and fills his imagination. His conceptions still rise above all the powers of his art, and he can but faintly copy out those images of perfection, which are impressed upon his mind. Never was any thing, says Tully, more beautiful than the Venus of Apelles, or the Jove of Phidias; yet were they by no means equal to those high notions of beauty which animated the geniuses of those wonderful artists. In the same manner, he observes, the great masters of oratory imagined to themselves a certain perfection of eloquence, which they could only contemplate in idea, but in vain attempted to draw out in expression. Perhaps no author ever perpetuated his reputation, who could write up to the full standard of his own judgment: and I am persuaded that he, who upon a survey of his compositions can with entire complacency pronounce them good, will hardly find the world join with him in the same favourable sentence.

The most judicious of all poets, the inimitable Virgil, used to resemble his productions to those of that animal, who, agreeably to the notions of the Ancients, was supposed to bring forth her young into the world, a mere rude and shapeless mass; he was obliged to retouch them again and again, he acknowledged, before they acquired their proper form and beauty. Accordingly we are told, that after having spent eleven years in composing his Æneid, he intended to have set apart three more for the revisal of that glorious performance. But being prevented by his last sickness from giving those finishing touches, which his exquisite judgment conceived to be still necessary, he directed his friends Tucca and Varius to burn the noblest poem that ever appeared in the Roman language. In the same spirit of delicacy, Mr. Dryden tells us, that had he taken more time in translating this author, he might possibly have succeeded better: but never, he assures us, could he have succeeded so well as to have satisfied himself.

In a word, Hortensius, I agree with you, that there is nothing more difficult than to fill up the character of an author, who proposes to raise a just and lasting admiration; who is not contented with those little transient flashes of applause, which attend the ordinary race of writers, but considers only how he may shine out to posterity; who extends his views beyond the present generation, and cultivates those productions which are to flourish in future ages. What Sir William Temple observes of poetry, may be applied to every other work where taste and imagination are concerned: "It requires the greatest contraries to compose it; a genius both penetrating and solid; an expression both strong and delicate. There must be a great agitation of mind to invent, a great calm to judge and correct: there must be upon the same tree, and at the same time, both flower and fruit." But though I know you would not value yourself upon any performance, wherein these very opposite and very singular qualities were not conspicuous; yet I must remind you at the same time, that when the file ceases to polish, it must necessarily weaken. You will remember, therefore, that there is a medium between the immoderate caution of that orator, who was three Olympiads in writing a single oration; and the extravagant expedition of that poet, whose funeral pile was composed of his own numberless productions. *Fitzosborne.*

§ 101. *Reflections upon Style. In a Letter.*

The beauties of Style seem to be generally considered as below the attention both of an author and a reader. I know not, therefore, whether I may venture to acknowledge, that among the numberless graces of your late performance, I particularly admired that strength and elegance with which you have enforced and adorned the noblest sentiments.

There was a time, however, (and it was a period of the truest refinements) when an excellence of this kind was esteemed in the number of the politest accomplishments; as it was the ambition of some of the greatest names of antiquity to distinguish themselves in the improvement of their native tongue. Julius Cæsar, who was not only the greatest hero, but the finest gentleman that ever, perhaps, appeared in the world, was desirous of adding this talent to his other most shining endowments: and we are told he studied the language of his country with much application: as we are sure he possessed it in its highest elegance. What a loss, Euphronius, is it to the literary world, that the treatise which he wrote upon this subject is perished with many other valuable works of that age! But though we are deprived of the benefit of his observations, we are happily not without an instance of their effects; and his own memoirs will ever remain as the best and brightest exemplar, not only of true generalship, but of fine writing. He published them, indeed, only as materials for the use of those who should be disposed to enlarge upon that remarkable period of the Roman story; yet the purity and gracefulness of his style were such, that no judicious writer durst attempt to touch the subject after him.

Having produced so illustrious an instance in favour of an art, for which I have ventured to admire you; it would be impertinent to add a second, were I to cite a less authority than that of the immortal Tully. This noble author, in his dialogue concerning the celebrated Roman orators, frequently mentions it as a very high encomium, that they possessed the elegance of their native language; and introduces Brutus as declaring, that he should prefer the honour of being esteemed the great master and improver of Roman eloquence, even to the glory of many triumphs.

But to add reason to precedent, and to view this art in its use as well as its dignity; will it not be allowed of some importance, when it is considered, that eloquence is one of the most considerable auxiliaries of truth? Nothing indeed contributes more to subdue the mind to the force of reason, than her being supported by the powerful assistance of masculine and vigorous oratory. As on the contrary, the most legitimate arguments may be disappointed of that success they deserve, by being attended with a spiritless and enfeebled expression. Accordingly, that most elegant of writers, the inimitable Mr. Addison, observes, in one of his essays, that "there is as much difference between comprehending a thought clothed in Cicero's language and that of an ordinary writer, as between seeing an object by the light of a taper and the light of the sun."

It is surely then a very strange conceit of the celebrated Malbranche, who seems to think the pleasure which arises from perusing a well written piece, is of the criminal kind, and has its source in the weakness and effeminacy of the human heart. A man must have a very uncommon severity of temper indeed, who can find any thing to condemn in adding charms to truth, and gaining the heart by captivating the ear; in uniting roses with the thorns of science, and joining pleasure with instruction.

The truth is, the mind is delighted with a fine style, upon the same principle that it prefers regularity to confusion, and beauty to deformity. A taste of this sort is indeed so far from being a mark of any depravity of our nature, that I should rather consider it as an evidence, in some degree, of the moral rectitude of its constitution, as it is a proof of its retaining some relish at least of harmony and order.

One might be apt indeed to suspect, that certain writers amongst us had considered all beauties of this sort in the same gloomy view with Malbranche: or, at least, that they avoided every refinement in style, as unworthy a lover of truth and philosophy. Their sentiments are sunk by the lowest expressions, and seem condemned to the first curse, of creeping upon the ground all the days of their life. Others, on the contrary, mistake pomp for dignity; and, in order to raise their expressions above vulgar language, lift them up beyond common apprehensions, esteeming it (one should imagine) a mark of their genius, that it requires some ingenuity to penetrate their meaning. But how few writers, like Euphronius, know to hit that true medium which lies between those distant extremes! How seldom do we meet with an author, whose expressions, like those of my friend, are glowing but not glaring, whose metaphors are natural but not common, whose periods are harmonious but not poetical; in a word, whose sentiments are well set, and shown to the understanding in their truest and most advantageous lustre

Fitzosborne.

END OF VOL. I.